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A MEMORIAL.

BY PHŒBE CARY.

Toiling early, and toiling late,
  Though her name was never heard,
To the least of her Saviour's "little ones"
  She meekly ministered.

Publishing good news to the poor;
  She came to their homes unsought,
And her feet on the hills were beautiful,
  For the blessings which they brought.

Such a perfect life as hers, again,
  In the world we may not see;
For her heart was full of love, and her hands
  Were full of charity.

O, woe for us! cried the weak and poor,
  And the weary ones made moan;
And the mourners went about the streets,
  When she went to her home alone;

And, seeing her go from the field of life,
  From toiling, early and late,
We said, what good has she gained, to show
  For a sacrifice so great?

We might have learned from the husbandman
  To wait more patiently,
Since his seed of wheat lies under the snow,
  Not quickened, except it die.

For when we raised our eyes again
  From their sorrow's wintry night,
We saw how the deeds of good she hid
  Were pushing up to the light.

And still the precious seed she sowed,
  In patient, sorrowing trust,
Though not for her mortal eyes to see,
  Comes blossoming out of the dust.

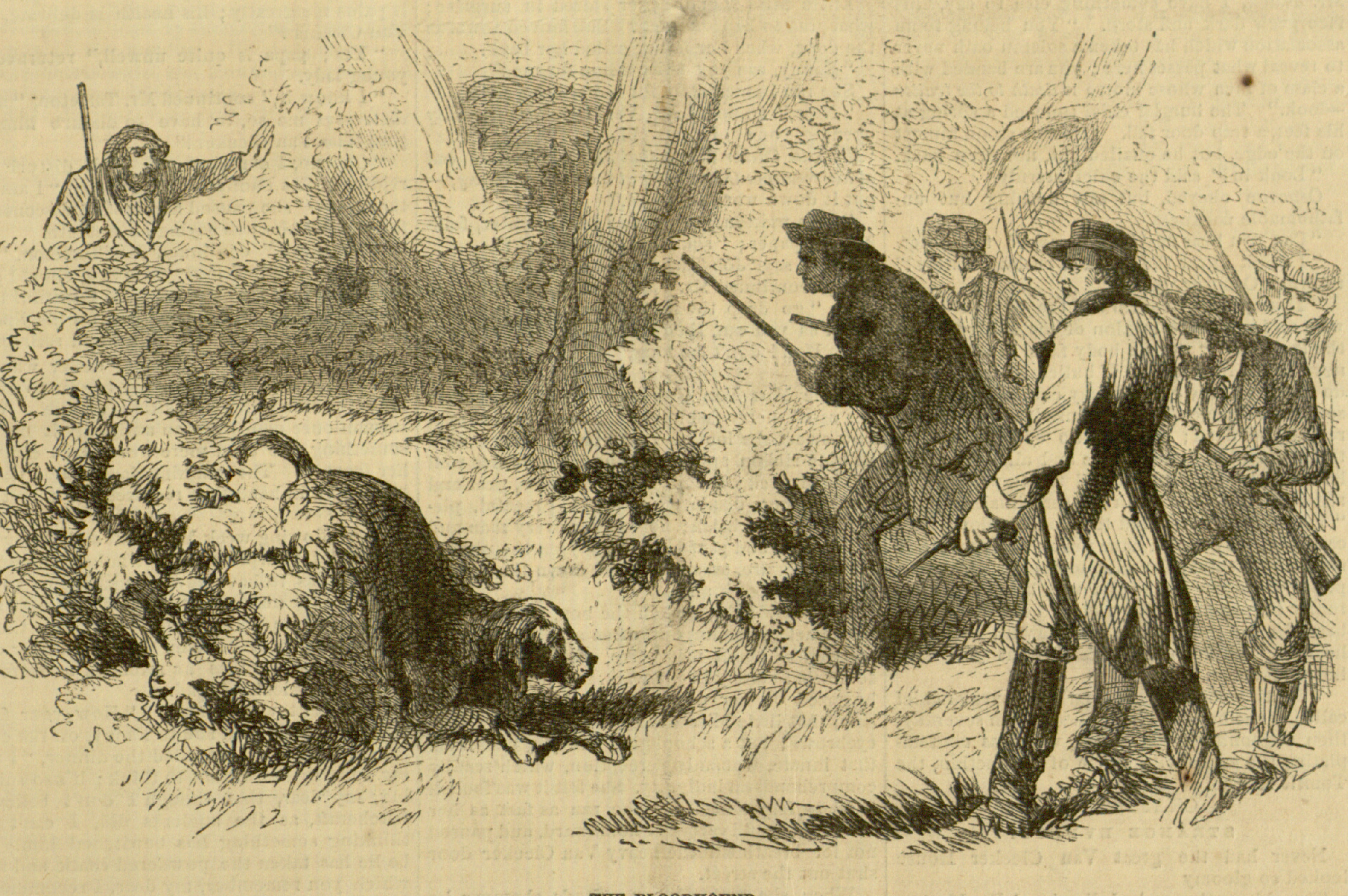
MOSES ORAN;

OR,

"THE BURGLARS' NEST."

BY GEO. CLARENCE BLANCHARD.

[ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1860 BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.]



THE BLOODHOUND.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE TRAIL.

We will now return to our friend the detective, who, as we have already related, was delivered, in a wonderful manner, from the double plot formed for his destruction. Carried almost passively away by his frightened horse, the whole scene seemed like some wild dream. He had instinctively drawn his revolvers, with resolute intention of facing his enemies, for he had seen a form and heard a voice that caused his blood to curdle, and his heart to well nigh stand still, not with fear, not with horror, but with one ungovernable emotion stronger than them all. To have leaped out of the vehicle, to have rushed upon and grappled with one hated foe, would have been but the work of a minute; yet he still sat listlessly grasping his pistols, the chaise tearing along at a mad rate over the rough, uneven road. Suddenly a new idea shot across his bewildered brain; his eyes flashed with it; the reins were seized, and with hoarse voice and whip well applied, he urged on the animal to a wilder speed; trees and rocks, hills and valleys, swamps and woodlands, flew by; the chaise jolted and swayed with fearful rapidity over stony beds and narrow causeways, but he slacked not his efforts. Ah! how many sleepless years of watchful search seemed repaid in one moment of fierce, exultant thought that the hour of retribution had arrived! Onward! onward! dashed the brave animal and his reckless driver, yet the motion seemed slow to him; he longed for something faster to keep pace with his maddened spirit.

It was still quite early as the exhausted animal paused, reeking with perspiration, before the gate of a substantial farm-house.

Springing out of the vehicle, Mr. Duffy rushed to the door and knocked loudly. The lad who opened it started back in alarm at the sight of the detective, whose haggard countenance still reflected the varied emotions of his soul. Remembering that he was in disguise, Mr. Duffy bade him call his father; the lad flew off, and met half-way a fine-looking old gentleman, who shouted out a hearty welcome.

"Helloo, Duffy! is that you? Come in and take a cup of coffee. Bless me!" added the honest old farmer, as he surveyed his friend, "I should know your voice but never you in that rig; what's happened?"

"Goodwin," replied the detective, hoarsely, "the Burglars' Nest is found at last! I was in it last night, and, thank God! I have them now!"

"*What!* have you tracked out the rascals at last?" ejaculated farmer Goodwin, excitedly; "here, Colin," he called. A sturdy youth promptly appeared.

"Did you call, sir?"

"Yes, Colin; have the men gone to work yet?"

"No, sir; they are just going."

"Then call 'em back; tell 'em something's turned up; quick, now! Here, Bob, you take the old mare and off to Squire Daley's like lightning; don't mind whipping her. Bless me! how did this happen?" continued the honest farmer, rubbing his hands.

"All by accident," returned the detective, as he followed his friend into the breakfast room. "I lost my way last evening, and stumbled on it without knowing I was there."

"You can tell it again?"

"I feel almost sure I can,' replied the detective, impulsively clenching his hands, as the memory of the hated form rose before him. "There are at least a dozen ruffians congregated there, but I trust we are more than a match for them."

"Let my boys alone for that," rejoined Mr. Goodwin; "they long to lick 'em; here, they are, now."

The announcement that the famous Burglars' Nest had been found created the liveliest excitement, for Mr. Detective Duffy and his purposes were well understood by them all. Without stopping to question him, each man hurried off to get his rifle, and the wagon was out and harnessed in a twinkling. The old gentleman forced his friend to take some slight refreshment; then exchanging his uncomfortable disguise for one of the farmer's overcoats and a pair of huge horseman's boots, the detective hurried out to join the party now gathered in front of the house.

The scene was quite animated for that quiet locality. Six stalwart men were busy ramming down their charges, Colin was saddling two fine horses, and Goodwin himself, leaning on his rifle, was surveying the preparations with an air of proud satisfaction.

"The men are grumbling because they haven't pistols," remarked Goodwin, "but I tell 'em maybe we'll have to storm their castle."

"Rifles are not very serviceable in a close contest, to be sure," replied the detective, but I have four pistols that I can lend them." The arms were distributed, and in less than ten minutes more the little troop was ready to start.

"Now, boys," said Goodwin, as he leaped in his saddle, "remember we aint going on a frolic, and may be there'll be tough work. If any man of you feels afraid, let 'im stay behind."

The only answer was a hearty cheer, and the wagon load rolled off, the farmer and the detective taking the lead. Rapidly they clattered over the rough road; no words were spoken; the fog had cleared off, and the sun rose with unusual brilliancy, showing to advantage the varied tints of autumn's livery. The direction, according to Duffy's hasty calculation, was at least twenty miles to the eastward, and he was too well acquainted with the country round to be deceived, or mistake the path. He dashed along with such headlong speed that the farmer could scarcely keep his horse from falling behind. As they proceeded, the feverish impatience of the detective carried him far beyond his friends. They called him to slacken his pace, when suddenly he reined up his horse, for his quick eye detected a man's head protruding from a thicket on the roadside. Almost at the same instant there was a flash and report of a pistol, and a ball whizzed close by him.

"On, boys," shouted Goodwin, "here they are."

In a second the young men were out and in hot chase. Duffy called them back.

"Are you hurt, sir?" inquired they in a breath.

"No—fortunately not," returned the detective. "This is a trick to lead us off the track; let us press on with all expedition."

The whole party accordingly resumed their places and proceeded more cautiously. Ten miles further, and the character of the country gradually changed to one of wild and picturesque beauty. Massive rocks bounded the prospect, rising one above the other in solitary majesty. Ever and anon the road grew so narrow and steep as to make it necessary to walk and lead their horses. They now reached a point where the main road branched off in two opposite directions. After a thoughtful calculation, the detective chose the one to the right, and the little party again pressed on with fresh energy. The correctness of his judgment was soon proved; as they wound up a steep acclivity bounded by dark, frowning ravines, he suddenly paused, his heart beat exultantly, for a few yards off he recognized the narrow defile where he had been attacked. As they approached, he pointed to a mass of coagulated blood that lay on the road. The men gazed at it with earnest wonder; there was no time for explanation.

"How much further is it, sir?" asked Colin.

"About three miles, I should judge; we may possibly reach the den in a half hour. Oh!" he added to himself, with inward bitterness of thought, "if I should miss it after all."

Two miles further, and the road became so narrow and uneven that the wagon and horses were by common consent tied in a thicket, and they proceeded on foot. The forest grew lonelier and wilder at every step of their progress. It was singular to look in the rough faces of those men, and observe how thoughtful and serious they were. Slowly they trod through the gloomy path; now and then a sign from the detective would cause them to pause, and almost hold their breaths as they listened. Then again they would start and instinctively raise their rifles at some fancied movement in the brushwood, and press on again with renewed vigor. As they proceeded, the flush of exultation that burned on the face of the detective faded away, and gave place to one of anxious doubt. More than a dozen times he stood still, as if to recall some familiar landmark. He remembered certain spots, for he had often been in the neighborhood before; but in spite of all his skill and correctness of vision, he could make nothing of the hundred paths that met, crossed, diverged and intersected the country in every direction.

Another long pause, and they resumed their solitary march without hearing a single sound but the echo of their own measured tread. It was evident the detective was uneasy and perplexed. Four miles further through a gloomy labyrinth that terminated in a road, and he acknowledged himself fairly at fault. There was no use denying it, for more than an hour's search had rather carried them from than towards the locality. On his stern face could be read deep and bitter disappointment.

The whole party now stopped and grounded their rifles.

"Have you lost your reckoning?" was the anxious inquiry.

"I fear I have," replied the detective, gloomily.

"Let me climb that peak and take a look around the country," suggested Colin, with all the ardor of youth.

"No use," replied the detective, shaking his head, "the place is almost entirely hidden from observation by the trees."

While they stood debating on the best course to pursue, a countryman passed them with a small bundle on his shoulder, apparently unconscious of their presence.

Regarding it as strange that any one should be in so unfrequented a portion of the country, they shouted after him to stop. The man no sooner beheld the armed group advancing towards him, than he dropped his bundle and looked the very picture of terror. On reaching him Duffy was disappointed, for the general size and appearance of the stranger hardly corresponded with a sudden suspicion that flashed across his mind. The man in the meanwhile had fallen on his knees, and begged earnestly for his life.

"Get up, you fool!" said Colin; "nobody's going to harm you."

"You be'nt robbers?" said he.

"No: have you seen any?" queried Colin, quickly.

The man pointed to the eastward.

"Don't you mind," observed Goodwin, "he points precisely in the direction we have been pursuing; who knows but he may have something to tell."

The man was now pressed to tell what he knew, and proceeded to relate that that morning he had stopped at a tavern, and had been robbed of money and maltreated. In confirmation of the truth of his story, he showed a number of bruises on his face and arms. His auditors listened with breathless attention.

"In which direction is this tavern?" asked the detective.

The man still pointed eastward.

"Will you show us the place?"

The countryman shook his head.

"It is too far off," said he, "and they'll kill me if I go back."

"Guide us to this place," said Duffy, "and we'll see that you are not harmed. You shall get your money again, and a handsome reward besides."

The man seemed anxious to proceed on his journey, but the sight of a revolver had the desired effect, and he finally consented.

Instructing Colin and one of his companions to keep by his side, the detective permitted their new guide to take the lead. He chose the same road previously gone over by the party, and after a tedious tramp up hill and down hill, struck in a narrow pathway. From this he finally emerged into a good wagon road, and continued on in a straight course for some miles, pausing, with a calculating air, to note his progress.

Duffy, whose suspicions were gradually excited, by the manner and strange manœuvres of their guide, beckoned to Colin.

"Keep close to that man," whispered the detective. "I suspect he's playing us false. Mind, if he falters, shoot him!"

"Aye, sir," was the prompt reply, and Colin returned to his post.

The countryman, meanwhile, in the same imperturbable manner, strode on, Colin and his companion still at his side, with their fingers on their pistol locks. Duffy, after carefully watching him a little longer, was convinced that something was going wrong. He had just concluded to stop and subject him to a rigid examination, when the countryman suddenly paused, and, with an exclamation of surprise, pointed to a rising mass of rocks lying towards the west. Every eye was instinctively turned in the direction indicated, when the countryman, with the fierceness of a tiger, sprang on Colin and struck him to the earth; rushing on his companion, he rolled him over likewise; then dashed into the woods, and, in another moment, had disappeared.

It is impossible to depict the astonishment, rage, and excitement produced by this unlooked for occurrence. So quickly had the whole scene transpired, that not one of them had even time to raise their weapons. Colin, half-stunned, swore like a trooper, and the rest were in very bad humor with themselves.

"The treacherous scoundrel!" exclaimed the exasperated old farmer: "he hasled us into the 'Devil's Nook!'"

It was too true. The "Devil's Nook" was a portion of the country well known as being a perfect labyrinth, so intricate, as to defy the nicest eye to penetrate its mysterious windings. Many a traveller had ventured into its unexplored depths, never to return again. The whole party looked the very picture of dismay. What was to be done? To advance was certain destruction—to go back was only to encounter fresh danger. Might not their foes already be concealed in ambush? The detective was silent with conflicting emotions. Could it have been his old enemy who had thus drawn them into this snare? He felt sure that it was, and cursed his own stupidity in being so egregiously duped.

They were still standing reflecting on the best course to pursue, when a loud crash among the boughs arrested their attention. Simultaneously every rifle was raised, when out sprang from the bushes a large bloodhound.

"Down, Tiger!" shouted a manly voice, and the well-trained animal instantly crouched, uttering a low whine.

"Don't shoot him!" exclaimed a half dozen voices at once, as Duffy partially raised his revolver. He lowered it in wondering surprise. At the same instant, a tall, graceful gentleman stepped in sight, with a hearty expression of recognition. He was dressed in a hunter's costume, and had a rifle slung on his shoulder.

"Squire Darley! You've got here just in the nick of time!" said Goodwin. "How in the old Nick did you find us?"

"Ask Tiger; he can tell you best," returned the Squire, smiling. "You see, as soon as your boy came with the news, I hurried off, taking Tiger with me as a guide. He tracked you pretty closely till we got to where your teams were hitched, and then he commenced snuffing around and acting so strange that I couldn't help observing it. I thought he was on your trail, and followed him. Pretty soon he altered his course, and led me here. And now," concluded the Squire, "tell me why you are all in this place?"

Squire Darley was soon informed of the whole circumstances, and he listened in speechless astonishment, and swore pretty roundly at the conclusion.

"And who do you suppose the scoundrel countryman was?"

"No other than the leader of the gang," replied Duffy, calmly.

"I have heard of him," returned Squire Darley, musingly; "he is a famous fellow, and the whole country is in dread of him. When the boy told me that the Nest was found, I did you all the credit to disbelieve it—it was too good news. Hi! look at Tiger."

The bloodhound was indeed acting exceedingly strange: for a few moments he had sat on his haunches, snuffing the air impatiently; now he suddenly leapt up, and, with his nose downward, trolled off directly in the line where the countryman had disappeared.

"Back, Tiger!" called his master.

But the dog took no notice, but continued on.

"Let him go," exclaimed they all; "he's on the scent of the scamp!"

They all simultaneously moved forward, keeping up as near as they could. The dog all at once paused, snuffed the air eagerly, and wheeled around and rushed back again. This manœuvre was repeated several times. Every rifle was made ready amidst hushed suspense.

"Look at him," whispered Darley, as they followed the dog; "he's on his trail now; see how he scents. Back, Tiger! back, I say!"

This last command was shouted in vain, for he raced off in a straight line, and though the Squire rushed after him with all his speed, and shouted himself hoarse, he took no further notice. Vexed at the unaccountable conduct of the animal, he hurried onwards to enable him to keep in sight of Tiger, who was dashing along at a fearful rate through the bushes. He heard his growl—a growl he never could mistake—that told him the game was found. Who could it be? Was the bloodhound already tearing his victim? Squire Darley was a humane man—he ran with all his might towards the spot, when suddenly the bloodhound uttered a sharp cry of agony, and all was still.

"My noble dog! my poor Tiger!" gasped Squire Darley. "Oh! infernal scoundrels, have they killed my dog!"

With a frenzied heart he madly tore through the bushes, vainly seeking for him. He paused and listened. In the distance he could hear his friends hastening through the woods; but everything else was quiet; not even a motion of the leaves disturbed the calm that reigned around. With an exclamation of grief, the Squire threw himself on the ground. His dog had been slain, there could be no doubt of it; for right there a stream of dark blood was dripping from the branches, and a puddle of gore lay at his feet.

Meanwhile the detective and his friends arrived in breathless excitement. They had feared that the cry proceeded from the Squire, and were greatly rejoiced to find him uninjured. But he heeded not their congratulations; pointing sternly to the life current of his faithful animal, he swore a bitter oath that he would never cease or relax his efforts till he had sought out and punished the murderer of his dog. All attempts to console him proved fruitless; and, having by this accident found an outlet from the dreaded "Devil's Nook," they slowly and sadly wended their way homeward.

CHAPTER VIII.

A JOURNEY.

The morning dreams of Osborne were fairy visions such as had often floated over his young brain in more wakeful moments; reared, as all orphans are, amongst a crowd of strange faces, no pleasant smile or affectionate greeting was his; yet the chief delight of his childhood consisted in sitting for hours together musing over the pretty pictures his fancy had drawn, linking and connecting them as though they were cherished scenes of the past, constantly bringing up one loving form that clung steadfastly to his heart, though he had never seen her earthly likeness. His sainted mother even then seemed to waft her angel spirit over him in his childlike slumber; to hover over that girlish face, and chase away every image of darkness and gloom.

Osborne was dreaming. It seemed to him that a fair-faced lady was bending over him with an expression of winning softness, even tenderness. Something whispered that it was his mother, that being whom he had so often longed to see, and now his prayer seemed answered. Wonderingly, and with awe, he gazed on those features so sweet, yet so sad—and now the fairy vision seemed to melt away, and the blue eyes and brown tresses transformed themselves into the grim and surly features of Mr. Snag.

"Come, Pluck," growled that individual, awakening Osborne with a rough shake, "it's time you wos up."

Mr. Snag was bending over his protégé with a lantern. Osborne rubbed his eyes, and gradually brought to mind the circumstances of the previous evening.

"Move your pegs, young 'un," said Mr. Snag, impatiently; "we aint got a moment to spare, and the man's been waiting for us a matter of ten minutes already."

Osborne jumped up at this command, and with a yawn proceeded to arrange his slender toilet. He looked around for a wash-basin.

Mr. Snag noticed the movement, and observed with a grin:

"Want to wash your face, eh?"

"Yes, I do," replied Osborne.

"Then you'll have to want," continued Mr. Snag, buttoning up his coat preparatory to starting. "We aint got a streak of time to lose, and besides, there aint no basin here; Winker don't keep such things. Now, young 'un, move on."

With these consolatory remarks, Mr. Snag pushed his protégé through the dark entry, and conducted him down stairs.

A one-horse cart was standing in the alley, and though the day had not yet shown the faintest glimmer of approach, Osborne discerned a man, muffled in a cloak, sitting on the front seat. Mr. Snag assisted his companion in, and then jumped in himself.

"All right, Bill?" inquired the figure.

"All right!" responded Mr. Snag, and the cart jogged down the alley at an easy pace. Osborne would have liked to have asked a few questions, but Mr. Snag, in a very abrupt manner, signified that the less said the better. So Osborne contented himself with watching their progress, and his patron took a short nap.

In about a half hour's space it was evident that they were leaving the city gradually behind. Osborne, tired with staring ahead, was getting drowsy, when their vehicle paused, a few miles beyond the city limits.

"Now, young 'un," quoth Mr. Snag, leaping out and motioning him to do the same, "trot along; we've no time to spare."

Leaving the cart to return, Mr. Snag, with his protégé, crossed a field, and struck briskly into the main road. The day was just breaking as Mr. Snag made an impressive halt.

"Now, before we go further," remarked that gentleman, "I want to caution you: Don't be too tonguey. If we meet anybody, and they will clack, let 'em; but keep your own mouth shut. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Osborne. So the burglar continued on.

Daylight overtook the pedestrians ten miles beyond Philadelphia; the air was damp and chilly, and Osborne, notwithstanding the rapid exercise, shivered with cold. Mr. Snag, who had not much sense of any one's comfort save his own, pressed on in a very cheerful frame of mind, whistling to himself, and carefully refraining from entering into conversation. They had gone over four miles more of hard, uneven ground, when a wagon caught up with them. The driver invited them to a lift, which was accepted, and they then proceeded on more rapidly.

"Going up to York borough?" inquired the driver.

Mr. Snag nodded his head.

"Got a hand there?" continued the driver, with an inquisitive glance at Osborne.

Mr. Snag, with an admonitory wink at his young protégé, replied that he was a hand.

"Very good-looking for a hand, aint he?" persevered the driver.

Mr. Snag shook his head evasively, and the other finding no hope of getting up a conversation, said no more.

They now reached a public house, very much to the satisfaction of Mr. Snag, who was anxious to get rid of his inquisitive acquaintance.

"Now, young 'un," said that gentleman, "we'll take some breakfast."

Osborne readily acquiesced, and their meal was forthwith despatched. Refreshing himself with a glass of rum toddy, which, as he observed, "was a very good thing to keep off the chills," Mr. Snag motioned to his protégé, and they proceeded onward. It was a weary, toilsome march, up hill and down hill, across rushing streams, and through dense forests. Still the redoubtable Mr. Snag gave no signs of flagging, but, on the contrary, rather seemed to quicken his pace. His youthful and less sturdy companion was more than once compelled to stop and rest himself, much to the discomfort of the other, who hinted that the journey was not half completed.

It was near seven o'clock in the evening ere they reached a tavern, where they duly halted and put up for the night. Osborne slept like a top, but long ere dawn he was hurried up by his companion, and the journey resumed in the same monotonous way. Mr. Snag grew less and less communicative, and Osborne was left to his own reflections; he had plenty of time to indulge in a variety of speculations as to the probable termination of his extraordinary adventures, for extraordinary they certainly were. In his very recklessness, in his very indifference of life, he had joined, or was about to join, a class of men whose purposes and aims he knew to be unlawful and wrong. He had allied himself to them not from any sympathy, but rather in his wild love of adventure and excitement. He was just of an age when circumstances control the mind, and sway it to good or evil; just at the period when an accident might transform good principles into bad ones. Had a recruiting sergeant picked him up on the eventful afternoon which introduced him to the reader, he would have enlisted in the same spirit. He was now a burglar, or going to be one—did he approve of it? His conscience said no; he even blamed himself for his hasty precipitancy, but it was too late to retrograde; he had taken the step, he must now be prepared for the consequences.

"Wot you thinking about, Pluck?" suddenly interrogated Mr. Snag, turning round with an inquisitive glance at Osborne's earnest countenance.

"Well, Mr. Snag," replied Osborne, promptly, "I was thinking how much further you intended to take me. I didn't bargain to go to Jerusalem."

"Don't you want to know?" inquired Mr. Snag, prefacing the remark with a bitter oath. "I'll tell you, Pluck, when we get there, not before."

With this very comfortable and satisfactory reply, Mr. Snag walked on with fresh animation.

The sun was going down behind the rocky precipices and gloomy forests, and the two travellers were apparently far away from human habitation. Mr. Snag grew more abrupt, and answered his comrade only in monosyllables. Osborne, tired and uneasy, could scarcely throw off a vague feeling of alarm that gradually crept over him as he surveyed the lonely scene, and his strange companion. He followed on, however, without permitting Mr. Snag to read on his face a single tell-tale expression. It was fast getting dark, and still the two went plodding on. Suddenly there issued from the woods a peculiar cry; the cry was immediately answered by the burglar, and the next moment Mr. Snag came to a dead stand.

"All right!" he shouted. Whereupon the bushes were pushed aside, and six dark-visaged men emerged from the thicket.

"This is our new pal," said Mr. Snag, briefly.

"Very good," spoke one of them, approaching Osborne at the same time and producing a handkerchief; "he must be blindfolded."

Osborne quietly submitted to the process, wondering what was to come next.

"Now look out, Pluck," whispered a voice in his ear which he recognized as Mr. Snag's; "you're going to be led to the Tomtit—he's our chief; you know wot I told you; just so. Start ahead!"

This last sentence being directed to the men, Osborne felt himself pulled along with little ceremony. A walk of about fifteen minutes' duration through rustling leaves, and the party ascended steps; a hurried whisper, then they proceeded through a passage, and Osborne conjectured from the confined atmosphere that he was now being conducted into a room. He heard a confused murmur of tongues, then a commanding voice ordered the bandage to be removed from his eyes. Dazzled by the light of several candles thrust in his face, at first he could see nothing, but on regaining his vision, he discovered that he was surrounded by an ugly assemblage of ruffians, all earnestly and curiously staring at him.

In the centre of this unprepossessing group was a man of handsome features and kingly aspect, who, the moment the handkerchief was lifted from Osborne's eyes, stood as though transfixed, gazing on the boy.

"How like!" he murmured; then changing his expression to one of intense astonishment, he asked: "Who in the devil's name are you?"

Osborne no less surprised at the singular demeanor of the burglar chief, folded his arms and replied with his usual coolness and sang froid:

"Osborne Pluck!"

"Pluck!" repeated the Tomtit, still looking hard at the young man; "that's a name that will suit you at present; none but plucky men are required here. Boys," he added, "all of you leave this room, I want to catechise your new pal."

The order was silently obeyed, and Osborne and the burglar chief were alone.

"Now then," observed the Tomtit, exhibiting a pair of pistols, and raising their hammers with an enormous click, "do you know what these are?"

"Yes," replied Osborne, calmly, "I think I do."

"Very likely," returned the Tomtit dryly. "Now, young man, suppose I should"—pressing as he spoke, the weapons close to Osborne's temples—"pull these triggers, what would be the consequences?"

Osborne did not wince an inch, but coolly replied:

"It would blow my brains out, I suppose."

"Very good," rejoined the Tomtit, immediately lowering them, with the air of a man who has satisfied himself on a certain point; "now, Mr. Pluck, I have something else to say," his face grew dark and stern. "You belong to an association which has taken a solemn oath never to reveal what passes here; you are banded with a class of men whose motto is *death to the traitor*—look." The burglar chief touched a spring at his feet, a trap door fell. Osborne stood almost on the edge, but he quailed not, nor drew back.

"Look in!" said the chief, sternly.

Osborne obeyed, but saw nothing but unfathomable darkness.

"Can you hear anything?" asked the other.

"I think I hear the sound of rushing waters!" returned Osborne, quietly.

"Young man," continued the burglar chief, with an impressive motion of his finger toward the trap-door, "when a body falls in there, it is never heard from again. If bullets slay, or knives do the work, the ground may conceal for a season, but some accident may turn it up, or chance reveal the deed; but here no eye can see, no tongue can tell—one plunge and all is over," as he spoke he suddenly closed the trap-door, and regarded Osborne with a scrutinizing gaze. "Young man," resumed the Tomtit, slowly and carefully, "I see you have nerve, and nerve is a necessary element for a life of danger and enterprise. In a few weeks you will have an opportunity of proving your right to the name you bear, for the present I have done with you; and hearken, lad, keep to yourself what you have heard and seen."

With this concluding remark the burglar chief called in the boys and introduced them severally, then beckoning to Mr. Snag, who was contemplating the scene with a grin of satisfaction, the Tomtit retired.

CHAPTER IX.

STRANGE EVENTS!

Never had the great Van Cleeker House looked so gloomy

The old gentleman had dismissed Dr. Merton in a rage, for boldly expressing the opinion that his patient was in a fair way of recovery; Mr. Van Cleeker was daily growing more irascible and less nervous; inaugurating his restoration by tyrannizing over the members of his little family, finding fault with Mrs. Platt, scolding Miss Fanny, closing all the blinds, forbidding all socialities, and stubbornly refusing to see all visitors. Little Miss Van Cleeker was not permitted scarcely to move out of his sight; day after day she remained in the invalid's room listening, in her patient way, to his "tale of symptoms," for no subject pleased him so well as discoursing on his late disease.

"How cross papa is," said Miss Fanny as she sat in her aunt Susan's chamber one afternoon, holding a skein of silk which the good lady was spooling with quiet rapidity; "he's so inconsistent that I hardly know how to please him; I try to please him don't I, aunt?"

"Yes, I think you do, my dear," returned Mrs. Platt with an affectionate smile. "Brother seems all out of kelter sometimes; he's just like Pythagoras in his tub and——"

"Don't you mean Diogenes?" interrupted Miss Fanny, smiling.

"Well, my dear, now I come to think of it, I did mean Diogenes, though it don't matter much which it is; you remember, my dear, I said to your father yesterday, that it was very wrong in him to keep you so confined, and that the Spartans, my dear, always gave their children plenty of exercise, when he shut the door right in my face; I am sure I didn't deserve it."

"How funny he served Mr. Perks," laughed Miss Van Cleeker; "papa thought he was making me feel so bad when he told him *never* to set his foot inside our house again."

"*Fanny!*" called a voice from the next room.

"*There*, if he hasn't waked up already;" exclaimed Miss Fanny, rising and running to the door.

Mr. Van Cleeker was as usual ensconced in his arm chair by the hearth; the shutters firmly closed, and every object but the fire itself wearing a most uncongenial and dismal aspect.

"You little minx!" said the old gentleman angrily, as his pretty daughter entered and dropped a courtesy; "I thought I told you not to leave this room?"

"I only went to spend a few moments with aunt Susan;" pleaded Miss Fanny, with a demure expression of penitence.

"I have a great mind to box your ears," returned Mr. Van Cleeker, who had in reality no disposition to do anything of the kind; "set down there and tell me the news."

"Well papa, that's what I wished to do an hour ago, but you wouldn't let me," rejoined Miss Van Cleeker. "In the first place all the newspapers are full of the panic."

"Full of what?" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker.

"Full of the panic; everybody is failing in business, and they say," continued she, her black eye softening in a pensive expression, "that the poor will suffer so much this winter!"

"Let 'em suffer," replied the old gentleman with an attempt to laugh very maliciously, "why shouldn't they suffer; I'm very glad to hear of it."

"*Why papa!*" exclaimed Miss Van Cleeker.

"Go on you minx! is that all the news?"

"Well," continued the young lady, "all the banks are stopping."

"Let 'em stop," said Mr. Van Cleeker, recklessly, "*I* can't lose much, and it will do 'em good; hang the whole banking system anyhow."

Mr. Van Cleeker smiled again, for he thought of a large iron chest locked up in his closet, which was a good set off for the panic.

"I'm glad to hear of it," continued the old gentleman with an inward chuckle; "paper currency won't do for 1837; landed estate can't be rated at a farthing less, and as for my rents——" Mr. Van Cleeker paused and rubbed his chin thoughtfully, as though a fresh idea was uppermost in his mind. "Fanny," he asked, in a tone serious and different from his usual manner, "did Mr. Tarleton call yesterday?"

"Yes, papa, but you wouldn't see him," replied Miss Van Cleeker mirthfully; "he's been calling here every day for the last week."

"I wasn't aware of that; why didn't you let me know?" returned the old gentleman, his whole manner changed to one of earnest attention. "I wouldn't, if I had been informed of this, have slept a wink last night without seeing him; has he been here to-day?"

"No, papa," replied Miss Van Cleeker, much surprised at her father's changed manner.

Mr. Tarleton was the lawyer and business agent for the great Van Cleeker mansion, and lately everything had been left in his hands.

It was no wonder that Miss Van Cleeker was surprised, for since her return from school the old gentleman had seldom manifested so much interest in any one. Who was this Mr. Tarleton who could so suddenly transform her father into a new man? Was it merely business that could change his face to so restless and unquiet an expression?

Mr. Van Cleeker abruptly rose and paced the apartment apparently in deep meditation; his daughter watched him with her demure little eyes till she got tired of watching, and then she gazed in the fire and commenced thinking herself.

"Fanny!" spoke her father abruptly, "did you ever see Mr. Tarleton?"

"No, papa," was the innocent response.

"No, I suppose not," continued Mr. Van Cleeker, musingly. "Fanny, you may go to Mrs. Platt's room; I wish to be left alone."

Little Miss Van Cleeker stared in surprise; what was to happen next? She moved towards the door, when her father called her back.

"Fanny, can you write a line for me?"

She ran immediately for her writing desk.

"Now," resumed Mr. Van Cleeker, partially opening one of the blinds, "now write: '*Mr. Van Cleeker desires that Mr. Tarleton will call at his residence this evening at* 8 *o'clock precisely*,'—put it down word for word."

"It is written," responded his daughter, folding the paper; "shall I superscribe it?"

"Yes, say 'Job Tarleton, Esq., Oxford Place.' Now," continued Mr. Van Cleeker, resuming his seat, "go drop the note in the post office as quick as you can, then come back and sit with me. Ugh! don't be long," said the capricious invalid.

Little Miss Van Cleeker flew off singing in her usual merry fashion and put on her bonnet; how sweet she looked in her cottage hat, with its blue ribbon appendages nestling on her well rounded neck; her lilac colored dress, neat and close fitting, displayed a figure graceful, picturesque and girlish; no wonder every man and boy turned and gazed admiringly on the plump, graceful figure, as she tripped down the street, unconscious of it all.

She slipped the note in the box, and was just in the act of passing out, when a tall gentleman, apparently about thirty-five, well dressed and somewhat stately in his walk, met her half way; he gazed on her with such a bold, evil expression, that little Miss Van Cleeker blushed to the eyebrows; but a school-girl, she yet possessed that innate, womanly perception, which readily comprehends an indignity. She felt it was foolish to be so frightened, for she ran as fast as her little feet would carry her homeward, and paused not for breath till the heavy Van Cleeker door shut out the street.

When she reached her father's chamber he had fallen into a light slumber, so she crept softly out and went into the parlor, where she amused herself for a long while turning over the pages of a big volume of Josephus, Mrs. Platt's favorite book, now and then thinking with a half shudder of those fierce-looking eyes that still seemed to be bent on her.

There was a ring at the door-bell. Little Miss Van Cleeker hardly knew why, but it seemed to have an ominous echo. Its dismal cadence sent an involuntary thrill through her heart· impulsively she gazed out in the passage.

"Mister Van Cleeker doesn't see any one," she heard Nancy say, as the door opened.

"Yes, but he'll see me," spoke a naughty voice, and a tall form pressed in.

Miss Van Cleeker shuddered, and placed her hands before her eyes; right before her stood the disagreeable man with the fierce eyes.

He recognized her at once, and taking off his hat, bowed low and deferentially.

"Miss Van Cleeker, I believe."

"Sir!" replied the young lady, raising herself up to her full, little hight, while her black eyes sparkled with haughty disdain.

The stranger gazed at her with earnest admiration.

"You do not remember me," he said, smiling, and extending his hand; "you was a little girl when I last saw you. Don't you remember Mr. Tarleton?"

Miss Van Cleeker drew back proudly, the fierce eyes were bent on her so admiringly.

"If you are Mr. Tarleton," pursued the little maiden, her cheeks tinging slightly, "I believe my papa wishes to see you. Nancy, show this gentleman up stairs!"

There was so much dignity and flushed pride dwelling in that dimpled face, that Mr. Tarleton inwardly vowed she was the handsomest girl he had ever met. With another low bow, he turned and followed the domestic, leaving Miss Van Cleeker still in the passage.

The little maiden drew a long breath; this, then, was Mr. Tarleton. She had never seen him before, and she most fervently hoped she might never see him again. How repulsive were those fierce eyes, yet he was not an ugly man; far from it. She thought and mused over her father's strange and altered behavior that day, so at variance with his usual petulant manner. Mere business matters could not excite him so easily; there was a mystery at the bottom of this which she could not solve, and would not have cared to solve if it had not been so closely connected with this man.

Shaking her little head dubiously, Miss Van Cleeker returned to the parlor and recommenced turning over the leaves of Josephus.

Two long hours elapsed before Mr. Tarleton's measured tread was heard descending the staircase, and these hours seemed ages to the restless little maiden. The moment the front door closed, she hurried up to her father's room. She knocked softly, as was her custom, and was surprised that he returned no answer; gently she pushed open the door.

Mr. Van Cleeker sat in his usual position, his face bowed down apparently in profound reverie; he looked up on her entrance, and she easily read on his features the same anxious expression which had so recently puzzled her.

"Dear papa," she murmured, "I fear this interview has been too much for you."

He gazed scrutinizingly on her sweet, expressive countenance.

"Fanny, why do you ask that question?"

"Because," returned she, "you are too weak to talk about business matters; and besides, you look agitated."

"Yes, business matters do excite me a little somewhat," he muttered, pressing his forehead; "but, Fanny, you need not sit up any longer; it is near ten o'clock."

She looked down wonderingly in his face, and he put aside her wavy hair and affectionately kissed her.

"Now, good night," said he.

His voice was no longer harsh, but very sad.

Little Miss Van Cleeker retired, bewildered and perplexed, to her own apartment, and remained awake half the night meditating and thinking about her father and Mr. Tarleton; wondering chiefly why the former employed such a disagreeable agent, and inwardly hoping she would never meet him again.

Several days passed, and each evening brought Mr. Tarleton. The first and second day she managed to avoid him, but the third she was fairly caught.

She was tripping down stairs when the lawyer met her; in one moment his hat was off, and he waited deferentially for her approach.

"Miss Van Cleeker," said Mr. Tarleton, in a tone of the most winning softness, "I fear I offended you, by my abrupt greeting a few days ago. It seemed so natural to see you that I quite forgot that you was no longer a child; years fly by so, and make such changes."

Little Miss Van Cleeker paused and her cheeks glowed; yet his tone was so respectful and sad, that she hardly knew what to say or do. She had made up her mind to treat him rudely, and pass him by, but he looked so sorrowfully and deprecatingly in her pretty face that, in her good nature, she accepted the profferred hand.

"Miss Van Cleeker," said Mr. Tarleton, "I know you must regard me as an intruder."

"Not at all!" replied Miss Fanny, blushing in spite of herself.

"Yes," persisted Mr. Tarleton, artfully playing on her feelings, "your father has so much business that I am compelled to see him, though it pains me greatly; his health is delicate, Miss Van Cleeker?"

"Yes; papa is quite unwell," returned the young lady.

"I know it," continued Mr. Tarleton, "and it distresses me so, to have to disturb him, and *you*, Miss Van Cleeker!"

"Oh! no; I am sure you don't disturb me," rejoined Miss Fanny coloring again, "I am sure that is——" she paused and looked disconcerted for she felt she was saying an untruth.

"To think," continued Mr. Tarleton, "that the pretty child of four years ago, should grow so quickly into womanhood; the beautiful bud," he hesitated, a compliment was on his lips but it did not come—he bowed low and retired.

Miss Van Cleeker breathed easier when he was gone; she had gradually begun to regard Mr. Tarleton with a settled dislike. When woman once conceives an antipathy it must be something else than mere words that can wean her from it. The cunning lawyer felt that he had a bird in hand that required the nicest handling.

The following week Mrs. Platt and Fanny were both greatly surprised by her father announcing that he was to have several gentlemen to dine with him the next afternoon, and requested them both to make preparations. Mr. Van Cleeker even hinted that his daughter had better dress with unusual care, as he intended to introduce her to a particular friend.

Mrs. Platt was amazed. "How your father does improve," said she to Fanny, on the eventful morning that preceded the dinner, "I must say I hardly know what to think; it's so surprising, my dear, that though I don't believe in witchcraft, as the ancients did, I can't help thinking something has bewitched him. May be he has taken the powdered chalk and alum, which you remember, my dear, I recommended him to take, which I am sure would have cured him if he had, and——"

"Dear aunt Susan," interrupted Fanny, who was looking as beautiful as beautiful could look in her blue dress and wavy black tresses; "won't you please put in these ear-rings for me? dear me!" she added, "how mean father is, not to tell me who this particular friend can be!"

"Well, I shouldn't be at all surprised if it was Mr. Tarleton?" replied Mrs. Platt, sagely.

"Oh, aunt, impossible!" exclaimed Miss Van Cleeker, turning pale. "I wouldn't have taken so much pains if I had known that."

"Well, my dear, I'm quite sure it can't be any one else;" and the old lady was right.

When Miss Fanny entered the drawing room, in obedience to her father's summons, the first person she beheld was Mr. Tarleton; her color came and went, and the lawyer as he saw the flushed face, and graceful form of the little maiden, mentally acknowledged her power over him—he was already deeply enamored.

Mr. Van Cleeker had thrown off his invalid wrapper and was dressed in a fashionable frock coat—his gray hair was carefully brushed off from his face, and a clean ruffled shirt made him look at least ten years younger.

The gentlemen, two in number, rose on Miss Van Cleeker's entrance.

"This is my daughter, Mr. Tarleton," said the old gentleman, gravely.

"A young lady whom I have already the pleasure of knowing," rejoined Mr. Tarleton, with one of his bland smiles. "Miss Van Cleeker, your cheeks outrival the rose's hue."

Miss Van Cleeker coldly moved her head in acknowledgment, but made no reply; turning round her father introduced her to the other, who was just in the act of bowing.

"This, Fanny, is Mr. Tarleton's partner, Mr. Pump!"

Mr. Pump, who was a bald-headed man with a very bad squint in his left eye, gave another graceless genuflexion.

"I'm very happy ma'm, hem, to be introduced to you, very, ahem!"

Miss Van Cleeker looked amused.

Mr. Tarleton noticed it and smiled sympathetically.

"Miss Van Cleeker," whispered he; "you mustn't mind my partner's manners, he is not much used to lady's society, particularly that of young Misses."

Miss Fanny's only reply was a disdainful curl of her lip. The cunning lawyer was not to be balked in that way; he went to work carefully, and soon got monasyllabic answers from the young lady, who sat in her chair, with her eyes directed on the carpet.

Mr. Tarleton, when he chose, could be very pleasing and entertaining; he put forth his best powers, and soon was gratified to see the ice breaking. If Fanny had been a stupid girl, his batteries would have had no effect; but she was singularly quick, intelligent and frank, and it was not easy to hold out long before a conversational power managed with such shrewd adroitness. In a little while she was rattling on in as easy and unconstrained a manner as though she had always known him.

Mr. Tarleton was fascinated more and more by her conversation. Her sprightliness, her ingenuousness, her simplicity were inexpressibly charming! Intoxicated by the success of his artful manœuvering, he ventured on whispering in her ear a soft compliment. If he had been really as artful as he supposed himself to be, he would have advanced more cautiously; but as it was, the young lady bit her lip in scornful silence, and he drew in his horns.

Dinner was now announced; a dinner which reflected immense credit on Mrs. Platt, who was quite in her meridian, talking history with Mr. Pump, and listening with unfeigned admiration to that gentleman's learned opinions respecting the probability of Babylon having been founded before the flood; a theory which learned savans have stoutly maintained ever since.

Mr. Van Cleeker was the only person at the table who looked uninterested. All day he had appeared unusually silent and depressed. His distressed air was noticed by his daughter, who observed him more than once gazing at her with an expression of subdued melancholy. She did not know how it was, but she began to feel sad herself. A kind of sickening presentiment of evil clouded her brow, and drove the sunshine from her face. Even Mr. Tarleton noticed it, and attributing it to other causes, gaily strove to restore her animation. She was replying, or attempting to reply, to a merry witticism, when she uttered a faint shriek, for her father had dropped from his chair.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

A QUIET HOME.

Mr. Barstow had just returned to his native land, a bachelor of forty-five, and a confirmed woman hater, after having spent more than two thirds of his life in the East Indies. He hated society, and so sought a "quiet home," which he found in the house of an elderly widow lady, with one servant, Catherine. Mr. Barstow had a Hindo servant, called John, who waited on him, as the old bachelor would allow no stranger to come into his rooms.

John moved noiselessly about the house, cooking and serving his master's meals, equally at home, apparently, in the functions of valet and chambermaid, retreating to his attic when not occupied, and never in Catharine's way, though often unobtrusively assisting her. As to Mr. Barstow, he was never visible except in passing through the entries when he went out and came in from his daily walk, or waited upon Mrs. Parsons once a week in her parlor, where he conversed a few minutes with the good lady and departed after leaving a glittering gold-piece in her work-basket—the amount of his weekly bill.

So the months slipped away. It was late autumn when he came, and the winter passed, and the spring, and summer, and autumn came again. The silent house was all unchanged. Catharine had long been reconciled to the new inmates, and Mrs. Parsons had ceased to start at the apparition of John in his white garments and shining dark face in the dim halls, while Mr. Barstow, by quiet unremitting kindness of manner, and deference to her, had won her warmest regard.

So passed the days, and Mr. Barstow went out and in as usual. The day came on which he was wont to pay his weekly visit to his hostess, for the pupose of paying her bill. Coming in from his walk, he knocked as usual at Mrs. Parson's parlor door. The cheery voice of the old lady did not reply, but, after a moment's delay, the door opened, and a charming woman, young and fair, and of such a sweet, sunny aspect as warmed the bachelor's heart to its very centre, stood within the narrow aperture.

He bowed, and so did the lady, and he was about to speak, when she said, in a voice that sounded to him like the chime of silver bells:

"Will you walk in, sir. Mr. Barstow, I suppose. Please, be seated, sir, my mother will be here in a moment."

"Her mother," so this was the daughter he had heard so much about. He thought her absent on a voyage with her husband, who was captain of a merchant ship. He had supposed her to be at this moment on the other side of the globe, and behold there she was seated opposite to him in her mother's dim, quiet parlor, looking so fresh and fair, and chatting to him pleasantly in the sweetest of voices. He had never felt so awkward, and probably never appeared more so than under the influence of this surprise.

Presently Mrs. Parsons came in, and introductions followed, and the history of Mrs. Carhart's unexpected arrival. She had sailed with her husband, but in the English port, at which the ship lay for a time, she had been taken ill, and her husband had been obliged to leave her behind, and she had come home in the first steamer.

"Grace will stay with me now, until Captain Carhart returns. I hope her coming hasn't disturbed you, Mr. Barstow. I told her you had stipulated for a quiet home, and I have made her keep very still, and she has not opened the piano, or sung once, since she came, unless we knew you were out," said Mrs. Parsons, as she concluded her story.

Mr. Barstow was shocked, and he said so. "Mrs. Carhart was in her own house," he said, "and he had no right to interfere with any of her pursuits. If his presence in the house was a restraint upon her, he must seek another home. He could not think of putting her, or Mrs. Parsons, to the least inconvenience."

Mutual protestations followed, and Mr. Barstow concluded and won the day by insisting that Mrs. Carhart should, then and there, give him a specimen of her musical powers, and when she had complied, he professed himself delighted with the simple ballad she had sung, and his countenance confirmed his words. He remained to take tea with Mrs. Parsons, the first time he had done so since his entrance into the house, and carried a very happy face up stairs when he went, about ten o'clock; and even astonished John, by singing, while he was undressing, in a queer falsetto, a portion of the ballad he had heard from Mrs. Carhart's lips.

Mr. Barstow was much happier after Mrs. Carhart's arrival. He liked to see her sunny face, and would leave his door ajar to catch the cheerful tones of her voice. He invited her and her mother to take tea with him, and regaled them with specimens of John's Indian dishes, and with delicate foreign preserves and liquors. And he loaded Mrs. Carhart with presents of fans, and boxes, and beautiful rare goods from Eastern looms. He went out with her when she needed an escort, brought her books and papers, transacted her little matters of business, and, in short, made himself so useful, and was so happy in being of use, that he soon came to be looked upon as a kind, elder brother by Grace, as he had long been as a son by her mother; and the two conspired to pet and indulge him until John positively pined with jealousy.

This life was too happy to last. One day Mr. Barstow, coming home from his walk, knocked as usual at Mrs. Parsons's door. No voice bade him enter, but a suppressed sound, as of sobs and moans, reached his ear. He pushed open the door and went in. Grace lay prostrate on the sofa, pale and tearless, but with an expression of agony upon her still face, while beside her knelt her mother with tears streaming from her aged eyes. An open letter, and a crumpled newspaper upon the floor, seemed to point out the origin of their distress.

Mr. Barstow's anxious questions remained unanswered, and he took up the paper and read there the account of a fearful storm in which Captain Carhart's ship had been wrecked upon a rocky shore, far from any aid, and but one or two survivors had, through incredible hardships, lived to tell the tale of death and woe. So Grace had learned that she was a widow, and that, through all the late happy days she had spent, her brave husband had been in his ocean grave.

* * * * * * * *

Eighteen months from the day on which Mr. Barstow's heart was pierced with agony by the discovery of Grace's bereavement, he sat at his own "QUIET HOME," of which Grace was the happy and adored mistress. Such is the consistency of "woman haters."

A man in earnest finds means, or, if he cannot find, creates them.

THE HEART AND THE TONGUE.

'Tis a singular thing, said the Tongue,
That *you* must each accent delay;
I think, if I utter no wrong,
You need not remark what I say!
If all things must come from the Heart,
Pray how is the Tongue to succeed?
If people must speak by the chart,
They must speak very little indeed!

When the Heart its *chief minister* heard
Thus its rule and its counsel disclaim;
It throbb'd, without breathing a word,
And burn'd with a feeling like shame!
Then a spirit arose that, though mute,
Thrill'd with language so truthful and plain,
That the Tongue could no longer dispute,
But knew that rebellion was vain!

Far better, it sighed, *not* to speak;
Far better inactive the Tongue,—
Than to call forth a blush on the cheek,
Or the weak and the friendless to wrong!
The words which the feelings suggest,
Which affection and friendship impart,
These come to the tongue from the breast,
And that breast is the throne of the Heart.

Then assist—where assistance is kind;
Protect—and thy mission be blest;
Leave deceit and delusion behind,
And defend, to the last, the Oppress'd!
Guard thy honor as though 'twere a dower
That the Angels bestowed on thy youth;
And oh, matchless and great as thy power,
Be matchless thy Kindness and Truth!

* * *

THE GREAT MAN.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

It happened, once upon a time, that in a certain manufacturing town, the location of which need not be indicated, a movement, humanitarian in its object, was initiated by three or four right-minded individuals who did not happen to possess any of the usually required elements of influence. That is, they were poor young men, occupying humble positions, and scarcely known beyond a very limited circle in their own neighborhood.

These young men had observed with concern, the neglected condition of a large number of children whose parents were employed from ten to twelve hours in the factories every day. Only a few of them attended school, and these were constantly tempted by the others to absent themselves and join in their depraving sports. More than a hundred of such children, boys and girls, were growing up idle and vicious; and nobody seemed to care for them. Pests of the neighborhood, they were execrated, but not pitied with that true human pity which seeks to reform and save.

The young men to whom we have referred, talked frequently together on the subject of these unfortunate children, and at last resolved to make an effort in their behalf, with the townspeople. But, they lacked, as we have said, the usually required elements of influence. Some listened with cold politeness; some with but half concealed impatience; some with a quick rejection, so far as they were concerned, of all interest in the matter; a few spoke in commiseration—but all discouragingly.

"Let us call a public meeting at the Court House," suggested one of the more earnest of the young men, "and put the matter fairly before our citizens." Acting on the suggestion, the use of the Court House was obtained for a certain evening. The next thing was to secure an attendance.

There was in the town a lawyer of splendid abilities named Thurlow. He had the gift of language in a remarkable degree, and could hold almost any audience entranced by the power of his commanding eloquence. Mr. Thurlow was a very ambitious man. He looked forward to the attainment of a high place in the nation. Already he had been sent to the Legislature of his State twice; and now his thought was turned upon Congress. Mr. Thurlow was a shrewd, far seeing, prudent man—so far as mere human prudence goes—and never did anything from sudden impulse; or, as it is said, on the spur of the moment. There was in the world only one man for whom he cared anything, and that was himself. So action was always preceded by the thought, "How will this affect my standing and prospects?" True honor, in his estimation, was a high place among the distinguished and powerful. As he rose, by means of his fine talents and power to sway men through the magic of voice and words, his bearing grew more erect, and his manner more self-conscious. From the "common herd," he held himself more aloof; not in an offensive way, for he was a political aspirant, and that would have been fatal to his ambitious hopes—he must stoop to conquer here. But, he held himself aloof, while seeming in contact, as oil keeps free from water. He might float on the waves, but never mingle with them. He might use the lower stratum of society as a means of elevation, while yet despising them as inferior.

Such, in brief, was Mr. Thurlow; and to him the thought of our young humanitarians turned. He was waited on by two of the young men. They were strangers to him, and in appearance, manner and address, showed themselves to be from the humble walks of life. He heard them respectfully and then answered:

"This is a matter of too light importance for me to engage in, my young friends. Get clergymen to help in the work you have undertaken. The field is more legitimately theirs than ours."

"You can help more than any other man in town," was urged. "Only let us announce you as a speaker, and the court room will be crowded. And only give your hearty approval, backed by such an appeal as you can make, and a hundred neglected children may be saved from vice, idleness and crime."

But Mr Thurlow shook his head, answering.

"I must beg to be excused, gentlemen. Your choice of me is flattering; but I can't address your meeting. And permit me to suggest," he added, with his bland, worldly smile, "that you are looking, perhaps, a little too high in your choice of influencing means. Humble work, like yours, away down in the very lowest places of life, is done by the humbler agencies. Take them, my young friends, and operate by them. Excuse me for saying this; but the hint will be of use. It is given in all courtesy."

And Mr. Thurlow bowed the young men out. They walked away in silence and discouragement.

"Shall the poor, neglected, almost off-cast children of the poor—God's poor—find no advocate with the people," said one of the young men, speaking at last, and with some bitterness. "My heart aches under its burden of helplessness. How little can we do without a general countenance and co-operation of the citizens; yet how are we to secure this? One hour given to the cause by Mr. Thurlow, would have effected more than we can ever hope to accomplish. And yet, in his imagined greatness, he stands so far above the work that he cannot touch it with a finger. Alas, for such greatness! It is of self and for self; and selfishness is always mean and little in spirit, no matter what outside importance it may reach by inflation. Mr. Thurlow may go on rising; but he can never be a truly great man."

In the evening of that day, the young men met again to confer together on the subject near their hearts.

"Mr. W—— arrived in town to-day," remarked one of them.

"So I heard. Ah, if we could only get him to address our meeting!"

"Yes; that would settle the question," was replied. "But such a thing is not, of course, to be thought of."

"No. What power resides in talent! If it would now and then step aside from its ambitious paths, and stay its onward march to greatness, in order to help the weak, succor the oppressed, and teach the ignorant, what noble things for humanity might be accomplished!"

Mr. W—— was among the nation's most distinguished men. He had been for years in public life, and had occupied the highest positions in the country, next to the Presidency. His oratory was splendid.

Yes, if they could get Mr. W—— to address their meeting, their work would be of certain accomplishment. It came, at length, into the most sanguine of the party's thought, to approach Mr. W—— on the subject. His heart so yearned for the poor children, and he felt so deeply his own want of power and influence, that he was like a man in danger, grappling around him with something of desperation, and seizing upon the strong for support. So he called, alone, upon Mr. W——. He found two or three gentlemen with him; the town's best people, so called; and so esteemed, at least by themselves. Mr. Thurlow was of the number. He recognized our young philanthropist, and frowned as a suspicion of the truth crossed his mind.

"What do you want with Mr. W——?" he asked, in an undertone, as he crossed the room quickly, and met him ere he had moved three steps from the door of entrance. Mr. Thurlow felt in duty bound to save the great man from unwarrantable intrusion and annoyance.

"I wish to speak a word with him," answered the young man, in firm but respectful voice.

"Not about those dirty little vagabonds over by the mills?" Mr. Thurlow's manner was excited.

"Yes, sir, about those dirty little vagabonds over by the mills, as you are pleased to call them," said the young man, a feeling of indignation against the lawyer coming in at the right moment to give his mind firmness and tone. His heart beat falteringly as he came in, but now he felt brave. Mr. Thurlow, in attempting to place an impediment in his way, had only developed native force.

"You can't speak with him on that subject," said Mr. Thurlow. "I will protect him from such impertinence. It is disgraceful!"

Of course, this aside interview attracted Mr. W——'s attention. Though he did not hear, distinctly, what was said, he understood that the young man had called to see him, and stepping forward, he said, in a kind way—

"What is it? Does the gentleman wish to speak with me?"

"I came for that purpose," answered the young man, "and will consider it a great favor if you will let me say a few words. I am sure you will listen to me with interest."

Mr. W—— was impressed favorably. He saw true manhood, and the signs of a right purpose in the visitor, humble though he was in exterior compared to the elaborately made-up lawyer. And he answered with blandness and encouragement.

"I have no doubt of it in the world. Come, sit down, and say as many words as you please."

Mr. Thurlow stepped aside as the young man advanced towards Mr. W——, muttering half aloud—

"Too bad! Too bad! The fellow should be horsewhipped!"

Mr. W—— heard the last sentence; he felt surprise, but no abatement of interest. Something in the visitor had won him. His true perceptions had penetrated below the surface, and recognized the stamp of genuine manhood, and with that he was in sympathy, everywhere and at all times.

"Sit down, sir." Mr. W—— pointed to a chair. The young man sat down, and Mr. W——, taking a seat near him, put on the aspect of a listener. Mr. Thurlow, indignant, outraged, but silent, walked the room uneasily. He felt that this intrusion was a disgrace to their town. To have a parcel of ragged, dirty children thrust offensively under the great man's nose. It was shocking. Every moment he expected to see Mr. W—— start to his feet, and tower upward angrily, like a full-charged thunder-cloud. He did not hear what the visitor said; no, he was too much excited even to listen. The young man talked earnestly for several minutes. Then there was a pause. Mr. W—— was about to speak. The indignant lawyer listened for the words.

"When is the meeting to be held?" There was a touch of feeling in Mr. W——'s voice. Mr. Thurlow was in doubt whether his sense of hearing were not at fault.

"We have the Court Hourse for Thursday evening," said the young man.

"And this is Monday." Mr. W—— looked thoughtful and a little in doubt. "My intention was to leave on to-morrow afternoon."

"Don't think of this thing, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Thurlow, coming forward, and speaking with indignant warmth. "It's an outrage! I call it by no better name. The impudence of the application is only exceeded by its absurdity. The idea of your making an address in behalf of a parcel of miserable factory children! Our citizens have no hand in this affair, sir. They will be angry at the insult when the fact becomes known. You'd better retire, sir!" looking at the young man, and waving his hand towards the door.

"It is God's cause," said the young man, rising; his manner was dignified; his voice calm, clear, and full of that eloquence which the heart gives; "and his cause is always noblest and best. Oh, sir!"—his eager face was turned full upon Mr W——, "if you can linger here for one day, and give to this work a single hour, you will set on foot good impulses the fruit of which can never die. A hundred children rescued from ignorance and vice—the nursing mothers of crime—through one hour's earnest turning of the people's thought to duty by the power of that noble eloquence with which the Father of us all has endowed you! It is not mean, debasing work, sir; but great and good work. It will not be coming down, sir but going up, and standing side by side with angels."

"Thanks, my young friend," said Mr. W——, with emotion, as he took the earnest speaker's hand, "for all you have said and urged. I will remain over until Thursday, and plead for this good cause; and it shall not be stayed for any lack of effort on my part. Call your meeting, and announce me for the occasion. At twelve to-morrow see me here, and give me all the facts I shall need. Good day, sir! Count on my services, and in the strength of God I will not fail you!"

"And God will give strength and a reward," answered the young man, as he held Mr. W——'s hand, and looked up at him with a glad face and tear-brimming eyes; then he turned and left the apartment.

The large court-room would not hold one-half of the eager citizens who pressed for entrance on Thursday evening. Mr. W—— met them, with his great, true heart in the cause he had tarried to plead. The conduct of Mr. Thurlow had acted as an incentive in the right direction. He looked through the little selfishness of the would-be great man, and despised him.

When the heart of such a man as Mr. W—— melts to his theme, eloquence becomes irresistable. He took up the poor children, as in a tableaux, and presented them to his audience in such distinctness of aspect that shame, pity, and right resolve filled every breast. Then he spoke of them as living souls, each heaven-born and immortal; and in a few strong sentences showed the wonderful beauty, power, and nobleness of a human soul, compared with which man's highest works were mean and insignificant.

"If the Great God himself," he said, in a low, hushed, reverent voice, that went thrilling with its deep pathos to every heart in the assembly, "came down, stooping even to the assumption of our debased and depraved human souls, can we do a nobler work than now presents itself? Can we be more honored than to stand side by side with Him? I feel, at this moment, that I am pleading the greatest cause that has ever claimed my advocacy—the cause of human souls; weak, unguarded, almost helpless human souls, for the destruction of which all hell is moving. O, friends of humanity!" his voice broke out like a trumpet call—"to the rescue! to the rescue!"

When he sat down there needed no second advocate. A meeting was organized on the spot, and the wealthiest and most influential citizens moved to the work before them as with the will of a single man. Funds were subscribed liberally, and a committee appointed to organize a school, and to adopt all right means for attaining the end proposed.

As Mr. W—— moved amid the crowd, on his way to the door, after all was over, a hand caught one of his hands in a close, eager grasp, and a low voice said in his ears:

"God will remember you for this, in the day of his coming."

"And he will remember you also," was the reply of Mr. W——, as he recognized the young man who had moved him to the good work, and returned the warm pressure of his hand. They parted there, and never met again; but the single hour which that giant among his fellows gave to humanity, was productive of results that will live in still higher achievements, through ages yet unborn. Who can tell what good and great things for the world may flow from the action of one human soul, rescued from ignorance and evil?

If our great men—our men who by talent, wealth, distinction, or soul-stirring eloquence, have power to move the people, would step down occasionally from their high places, and seek to elevate the low, enlighten the ignorant, and save the vicious, what a new impulse to all humanitarian movements would be awakened. No man who goes down, in order to lift up the weak, the helpless, the fallen and degraded, loses anything of his true dignity. Far from it! In the sight of good men and angels, he towers far above the crowd of mean, self-aggrandizers, who would stand even on the necks of the fallen, in order to lift themselves into public observation. Truly noble work is unselfish work; and he is the noblest man who is least selfish. There is no higher patent of nobility than this. It is registered in heaven, "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant."

* * *

AN "OLD MAN'S DARLING."

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

Madeline Leroy was the beautiful daughter of parents stricken by poverty, and bereft of all that had belonged to more prosperous days, except their child. I think they loved her but they had been sordid in money-getting in their youth, sordid when wealth was theirs in middle life, and not less so, certainly, when, in old age, they found themselves stripped of all they had toiled to gain, clutched with pride, and lost with an unfathomable bitterness of regret. But they valued her little except as a patient drudge, and an uncomplaining recipient of all their querulous abuse, until old Matthew Lincoln saw her and bid so high for her bright young beauty.

And then when they saw that the child had a certain money value in the old man's eyes, they were sharp enough to drive a hard bargain. The old man groaned and protested, and talked of ruin, but he was determined to see that beautiful face at the head of his table, and so the child was bought at the price her sordid parents set upon her, remorselessly transferred, as the veriest chattel would have been—all her tears and entreaties as utterly disregarded as are the bleatings of the innocent lamb, that looks vainly into its slayer's face for the pity he cannot feel.

Madeline had received little education save such fragments of knowledge as seeking, longing spirits like hers, extract by their own subtle alchemy, from the curious combinations and events of daily life. And if there was one element of even reconciliation to that which was to follow, in her thoughts, it arose from Matthew Lincoln's stipulation that his promised bride should have at least one year's instruction at a celebrated school, and the promise that afterwards she should have masters and learn all she chose, and travel, if she wished to do so, to the great sources of knowledge in the old world.

And during that year the delight of acquisition—of quenching tormenting thirst at perennial springs, sometimes made her forget the fearful price which was yet to be paid. She was still bound only by a promise from which the future might absolve her. Some one of those chances which are no chances, but the orderly working out of unchangeable laws, might yet release her. But nothing occurred to prevent the consummation of this wicked bargain. Madeline had listened to the plea of duty until she almost believed she was doing Heaven service when she uttered the lie that made her Matthew Lincoln's wife.

A year had scarcely passed, and Matthew Lincoln had but just commenced to complain of the burden he had imposed upon himself in his desire to win his beautiful, cold bride, and to turn over and over in his sordid mind projects of at least partial release, when an epidemic swept over the city, and death relieved him of all further outlay than that involved in coffins, shrouds, and all the magnificent mockery of a fashionable funeral.

Madeline dropped many bitter tears over the graves of her dead, but the bitterest of all were those wrung from her by the thought that her sacrifice had been vain. Hitherto she had endeavored with patient sweetness to accept the consolations and compensations of her fate. Her husband's wealth, which the old man had bestowed with no stinted hand on his pretty new toy, had enabled her to cultivate her taste for art, to search into a thousand mysteries of knowledge, and to surround herself with all beautiful things. She had tried to idealize the coarse and, truth to say, repulsive countenance of the man to whom her parents had wedded her, to believe that silvery hair straying over pallid temples made him venerable, to see something that was not greed and cunning shrewdness in the twinkling gray eyes, and the wide, hard mouth. She had striven to believe that his appreciation of her beauty, his joy in possessing a wife who could adorn his splendid home, arose from an emotion such as had never warmed his heart. The Matthew Lincolns are not capable of such love as girls of eighteen dream of—pure, fervent, generous, elevating—but Madeline could not know this, for the book of human nature had been little read by her as yet.

But now his coarse words of self-gratulation at his release from the burden of her parents' support enlightened her at once as to his character, and she could no longer respond, even with the semblance of childlike affection, to her husband's fondness, and the old man began to tire of lavishing its expressions on one so cold and impenetrable. There had never been harmony between this ill-assorted pair, but now there was often positive discord, querulous complaints from the old man, and patient but icy rejoinders from the young wife. And he devoted himself more than ever to the business that he might well have found an excuse for abandoning forever in his overflowing wealth, while she turned to the art to which she had devoted herself, striving to forget all but the ideal world into which it led her. And for a time she did forget, and in her enthusiasm believed herself, what no woman can be without the ministry of the affections—happy.

The wail of her firstborn recalled her to her real life, and sad as it was, she knew in that hour her first pure joy. A year later another child was added to the household.

Beautiful as the angels of childhood's dreams were the little daughters of Madeline Lincoln. Lovely as the cherub forms that floated before her as she sat at her easel, and worthy, in all outward seeming, of all the passionate love she poured out upon them. And fair to look upon as they were, each trait that developed itself in their infant minds, showed that the outward loveliness was but the type of a corresponding soul-beauty. Nourished in a sphere of pure art, amidst an enthusiasm of devotion to beauty and a high poetic inspiration, that was almost religious in its intensity, they seemed rather the outgrowth of Madeline's abnormal life, than real, human children with physical wants and instincts. Strangers sometimes called them "angels," and it was difficult, at all times, to connect them in thought with one so essentially "of the earth earthy," as the father whose name they bore.

The old man would have loved these children, did love them, not with an entire appreciation, but as such as he love; but from the first manifestation of consciousness they showed a repugnance to his presence and caresses that neither time nor habit removed or modified. This, as well as their beauty and refined development, they had inherited from their unhappy mother. A fatal inheritance, since it was destined to awaken the worst passions of that other parent thus made, as one might say, a Pariah in his own household.

Day by day Matthew Lincoln found himself set apart by an inexorable influence that he could neither comprehend nor overcome, from the calm household charities that might have sweetened a life that had been all austere and ignoble in its aims. Coarse as he was, and ungenial, there was much to redeem the essential lowness of his character in the love he would have lavished on these children of his old age. And pitiable, indeed, was the sight of his querulous sorrow when they turned from him with an almost shuddering repulsion, to bestow the caresses he coveted upon their beautiful mother. Poor old man! deeply as he had erred, who could not have forgiven him who saw his gray head bowed in sorrow beneath this, to him, all inexplicable punishment.

As the years wore away, bringing no promise or fulfilment of his hopes, the old man became greatly changed. He had delighted to lavish his wealth upon the home he had provided for his declining years, and upon those to whom he looked for the joys that were to soothe them. But with decrepitude and warning infirmities, his mind, already soured by disappointment, lost its vigor, and he fell into a strange, melancholy condition, pitiable to behold, and pitiable for the misery it brought upon those whose earthly fate had been entrusted to his hands.

He believed himself verging toward poverty, and from having denied his household no luxury, he came to withhold from them many of the comforts that belonged to their station. The delusion grew and strengthened as his powers became enfeebled, until all his talk was of the poverty that menaced them, and his sole care to insist upon the various retrenchments he deemed necessary.

From a palace to a cottage was the first transition. All Madeline's treasures of art were scattered to the winds; and, worse than all, the numerous cares that devolved upon her with narrow expenditure, and reduced establishment, deprived her of the leisure she had been wont to beguile with her beloved pursuits. But for her children, whom she so loved, and whose education now devolved upon her, she must have sunk beneath the hardships that were continually forced upon her.

For ever as the mania increased the old man betrayed more his sordid and miserly disposition. Twelve years after her marriage, a friend of her school days saw Madeline living in poor lodgings, the veriest menial of her stricken and infirm husband, whose sole relic of mental vigor was all bent upon the one thought of coming poverty and needed retrenchment.

Housemaid, nurse, governess, and seamstress, Madeline's days were spent in toil that no kindly appreciation enlivened. Her rare moments of leisure were spent in copying pictures for hire, thus to procure the essential clothing and books for her little ones, that her husband could not be persuaded to buy. In this life of menial drudgery, her love of art became a torment as it had once been a pleasure. But for her children she must have yielded long before death sundered the chains that bound her in such a servitude.

At thirty-five Madeline was at last free. But freedom came too late. Health was gone, and with it the power of enjoyment, and, strange to say, she mourned bitterly for the old man's death whom she had never loved. Morbid self-reproach embittered her remaining days. She believed she had not done all that was possible to make him happy—that she was responsible for the wrecking of his mind, for all the sorrow and bitterness that ended in that fatal aberration.

Not all the love of her children, not the restored luxuries, the lavish wealth now solely hers, not even the promises of religion could rouse her from this morbid state. Toil and care and self-reproach had done their work, and when, a year later, they laid her in her coffin, gray hairs and wrinkles belied the figures upon its lid, and told of a decay that suffering, not time, had wrought.

It was a sad life, defrauded of its noblest purposes. But nature will not be thwarted. Her laws had been transgressed and the inevitable penalty of suffering and sorrow had fallen upon the transgressors. He who is wiser than man knoweth why the most innocent should have most deeply felt the punishment.

* * *

We should be most especially on our guard in the sunny days of prosperity, lest our hearts get a chill in the groves of worldly pleasure and wanton enjoyment.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

It is the mountains that first reflect the morning's red wing; the mountains that glow with the sandals of departing day. On them the Law was given 'mid thunder and cloud: on them the Sermon was uttered 'mid sunshine and peace; all day they are covered with grandeur, and 'visited all night by troops of stars.' From their white distaffs flow the threads of great rivers; they lift old Winter upon their shoulders, and June lies asleep at their feet.

In mythology the same deity not unaptly presides over Silence and Light—showing that it is only out of the depth of contemplative silence that the great light of the soul, Truth, can arise.

The Future is the heaven where the Past is glorified. In the strong man's bosom each dead Past rises to a coronation-day in the Future, more glorious than ever, transfigured with beauty and light.

A young man advertises for a wife who is pretty and doesn't know it. If he wanted one who is homely and doesn't know it, he would find no trouble in getting suited.

If we had not within ourselves the principle of bliss, we could not become blest. The germ of heaven lies in the breast, as the germ of the blossom lies in the shut seed.

Many men die martyrs, and then have an impartial judgment passed upon their lives, just as the poor whales are killed first and tried afterwards.

Some of us fret inwardly, and some fret outwardly. The latter is the better plan for our friends, but the worse for ourselves.

The miser carries nothing into the next world but a very mean soul, and that probably is as little valued there as here.

Strange that many old men will make love when they can't see their mistresses except through spectacles, nor hear them except through ear-trumpets.

Unsound thoughts are not as easily drawn from a man's head as unsound teeth, and it is generally a more disagreeable operation.

If men and women are not ashamed to get married, it seems strange that they generally do it just as rogues run away—between two days.

The soul in its divinest moods is ever an orphan—a wanderer that kisses old gravestones and dreams of old homes in new heavens.

Cities are the great theatres where the grand tragedy of Man is played with the most vivid representation.

There is many a vain woman whose character would as ill bear inspection and analysis as her little girl's doll.

A charming female writer says that the men like to pick the ladies to pieces. It is certainly very pleasant sometimes to take them apart.

The maiden who loves and is loved may be accounted rich. A golden Pactolus flows through every vein and deposits its treasures in her heart.

The poet is the priest of Nature, who, bearing her image in his bosom, teaches mankind to adore her.

Misfortune is often the organization of fortune; a fluid diamond which congeals to crystal; a disease of longing which becomes a pearl.

Hope is the universal good—the captive's freedom, the sick man's health, the lover's victory, and the beggar's riches.

When a young lady hems handkerchiefs for a rich bachelor, she probably sews in order that she may reap.

The mother of Achilles showed her maternal regard for him by taking him out at a very early age and applying the Styx to him.

Don't open your purse too hastily or too wide—nor your mouth either.

The hair should be brought over an unpleasant female forehead as vines are trailed over a wall.

Don't carry your antipathy to royalty so far as to break the crown of your head.

It is very common for men, when corned, to have husky voices.

Self-reliance is reliance on God.

* * *

CURRENT ITEMS.

A little boy three years old, who lives in Hartford, was left alone one day recently, and thinking that he heard a rat under the bed he lighted a match and began to search for it. He soon set the bed on fire, and in his alarm at the consequences of his conduct, the little fellow *got into the bed and covered himself up, head and heels.* Fortunately the fire was discovered in time to rescue the child from what else would have been certain death.

Burglars seem to be unusually active at this time in all parts of the country; the papers teem with accounts of the burglarious entering of dwelling-houses, offices, stores, and public buildings, and the "appropriation" of large amounts of money, plate and other valuables. Everybody having anything worth stealing, should see that their doors and windows are well fastened at night.

A sailor named Fitzhugh was assaulted while at sea, by one of the officers of the vessel, as he was steering the ship; the officer struck him on the shoulder with a belaying pin and knocked him down, and then jumped upon his breast and injured him so severely that the poor fellow had to be taken to the hospital when the vessel arrived in port.

A vagrant woman, with a dog at her heels and another in her arms, was arrested not long since in Buffalo, and sent to the workhouse for sixty days—a fate which she cheerfully accepted on condition that her dogs should be allowed to share it with her; and the magistrate being a tender-hearted man, sent the dogs along with their mistress.

The Indian depredations in Western Texas continue. More than a hundred farms have been lately abandoned on account of them. Several families were recently murdered; a lady named Sherman, who had been shot with an arrow, scalped, and left for dead, was found five days afterwards still alive.

A very large eagle lately made a swoop at the poultry-yard of a farmer near Jonesboro, Ill., and seizing a plump goose, struck for the empyrean; but the farmer, though 65 years of age, was too nimble for him, and with a rifle-ball soon laid his eagleship sprawling on the earth.

A desperado in St. Louis, who had a grudge against a neighbor, entered his residence one evening, and felled him senseless to the floor. The police pursued the ruffian, and on being overtaken he fought so desperately that it took four officers to secure him.

A Delaware paper says that three men were recently hung at Georgetown, in that State, on the same day—one for an infamous assault, another for murdering a young girl, and the third for killing a baby fourteen months old.

While a family living at Port Ewen were at church, one Sabbath recently, $500 in cash, and many articles of value were stolen from the house; the coachman being suspected, was watched, and at last detected, and all but $20 of the money recovered.

A little boy in Vermont, who is reported to have swallowed a cent last summer which the physicians have been unable to dislodge, is said to be dying slowly of copper poison; his legs have become paralyzed and he is constanly growing weaker and weaker.

A woman seventy years old, who was addicted to intoxication, was found frozen to death, one cold morning recently, in Bangor, Me. She had been dead drunk during all the previous day.

A poor woman living in Havre de Grace, Md., left her little boy covered up in bed one cold day lately, while she went out to work; and on her return she found him lying on the floor, frozen to death.

A German working in a brewery, fell into a vat of boiling water one morning recently, and although he was immediately rescued, he was so badly scalded that he died in a few hours.

A little girl, four years of age, living in Yorktown, N. Y., was lately burned to death accidentally—her face and body being literally burnt to cinder.

An Illinois paper says that there are eighty-three divorce suits on the docket in the courts of that State, which have been commenced since May last.

A young lady out sleighing near Proctorville, Vt., a short time since, was thrown from the sleigh against a fence so violently as to break her neck.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

There are still those who dote on the good old times. They wish their lot had been cast amidst the somber magnificence of the Dark Ages. They say, with old Hesiod:

> "Oh, would that Nature had denied me birth
> Midst this late race; this iron age of earth!"

Now we should be glad to help any man to be contented with his lot and thankful for it; because contentment and thankfulness are the sweetest ingredients of human bliss. If we could go the vast rounds of the LEDGER, and infuse just one drop of this veritable elixir into the cup of every family, we should feel that we had bestowed upon each and all a more valuable New Year's Gift than if we had scattered all the gold of Rothschild and of Astor in holiday presents.

Facts are the best corrective of morbid sentimentality. Let us, instead of the nine league boots we used to read of when we were children, put on the *hundred year boots* of history, and taking three steps backward, look at the World as it was three centuries ago, and consider whether those were better times to live in than these in which the Supreme Disposer has allotted our phase of life.

Three hundred years ago—it is hardly necessary to say—there was no electric telegraph, no steamboat, steam-plough, steam-press, or steam-engine of any description. Those mighty elemental forces of steam and electricity had not yet been tamed and yoked in to the car of human progress. The lightning played wild in the clouds. The steam curled lazily up from the boiling pot. No man dreamed that the first was by and by to carry men's messages "in no time;" and that the latter was to sweep them over sea and land with a speed that would almost make wings a superfluity.

Three hundred years ago, there were no mails, no stages, no regular arrangements of any kind for conveying persons and news. Horse-posts were introduced into the Netherlands just about three hundred years ago, and were slowly extended to other countries. In 1635 Charles I. ordered "a running post or two" to be set up between Edinburgh and London, "*to go and come back again in six days!*" Parliament enlarged the postal arrangements in 1657, "as the best means," among other objects, "to discover and prevent dangerous, wicked designs against the Commonwealth, *by the inspection of the correspondence.*" The first mail coach was started after the American Revolution. It left London for Bristol on the 2d of August, 1784. Even then postage was so enormously high that mails were (as they were doubtless meant to be,) the exclusive privilege of the rich. The three-cent stamp carries the poor man's message now with inviolable secrecy, and at higher speed beyond all comparison, than the behests of kings were conveyed three hundred years ago, though they were endorsed with the command, "ride, ride, ride, for thy life, for thy life, for thy life."

There were no carriages three hundred years ago. There were but three in Paris in 1550. One of them belonged to the great king, Henry IV. It might have been well gilded, and all that; but a decent Yankee farmer would not carry his family to church in it. *It had no straps or springs.* They were a later luxury, and began to be used (only by a few families of the highest quality) about the end of the 16th century. Coaches were introduced into England by the Earl of Arundel, in 1580. In earlier times, kings travelled on horseback, princesses were carried in litters, and ladies rode behind their squires.

No European king had a watch in his pocket or a clock on his mantel piece, three hundred years ago. These inestimable conveniences in the complete and portable form, in which almost every man and every family has them now, were unknown. Even the rude and clumsy attempts at mechanical time-keepers, which were then beginning to be made, were only in the possession of kings and great institutions.

No coal for domestic purposes, no gas light, no lucifer matches, no caoutchouc or India rubber in its infinitely multiplied applications to comfort and art, no cotton or silk but to enrobe the persons of the rich and great, no tea nor coffee, no potatoes, no tomatoes, no Indian corn, nor (what some people think a comfort) tobacco, were in use in Christendom three hundred years ago. Some of these things had just been discovered. Coffee on its way from the distant East had got as far as Constantinople in 1554, and about ten years later was introduced into Paris. Tea was first tasted in England in 1666, though it had been brought by the Dutch from India fifty years before. Its price was then 60 shillings sterling a pound; so that the mass of mankind no more thought of tasting it than they did the nectar on Mount Olympus.

The intellectual wants of the masses were even worse provided for than their material comforts and necessities. Books now cover the tables and fill the shelves of every well furnished house, and like modest, intelligent friends, are ready to chat or be silent as you wish;—there were almost none of them out of palaces or public libraries three hundred years ago. One Bible cost as much then as a hundred Bibles now. Journals, daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly—which now turn events into history as fast as they transpire—were utterly unknown. The first newspaper was established in England in 1663. Newspapers and pamphlets were absolutely prohibited again by Charles I. in 1680. The Journal of the present day, with its rich and various contents, its cheap price, its vast circulation, its incredibly rapid diffusion, is a product and a peculiarity of our own times. The state of the arts would not have permitted it earlier. All the printing presses of Europe could not have brought out an edition of the LEDGER three hundred years ago.

There was not a really free State or Constitutional Monarchy on earth, three hundred years ago. The kingdoms (though disturbed occasionally by the tumults and struggles of oppressed subjects), were absolute despotisms. The Republics (so called) were rigid oligarchies. The People were not even a factor in the problem of politics. Public opinion had not yet become a power in the world. A weak and capricious king of France (Charles IX.) could massacre more than 70,000 of his best subjects by a "secret order," on no other plea than "the extirpation of heresy;" and yet sit undisturbed on his throne, and die peaceably in his bed. In this century, that same throne has been twice overturned and its occupant sent into exile for life, simply in consequence of *the violent suppression of a newspaper*. So much more powerful is the recoil of popular thought and feeling in the 19th, than it was in the 16th century!

Three hundred years ago, whipping was considered the best cure of lunacy; fire the only effectual corrective of heresy; and torture the best method of extracting true testimony. And as for spiritualism (called witchcraft in those times), those who were accused of it had their choice between drowning in innocence and burning in guilt.

The world had not been circumnavigated three hundred years ago.

Look from the tower of Trinity Church and you can see the cheerful and commodious abodes of a million of people. No Christian foot had pressed the soil of Manhattan island, three hundred years ago. Painted savages skulked along forest trails where now stand the capacious warehouses and palaces of New York. A solitary canoe, here and there glided along the shores now skirted by forests of shipping, exchanging the commodities and promoting intercourse, peace and good will between distant regions and races of the earth.

Upon the whole, we welcome in the year 1861 with a feeling of fervent thankfulness to the Author of all good, for the manifold blessings by which he has distinguished the present generation of men above those who lived *three hundred years ago*.

CHEERING THE TRAVELLER.

A farmer was wending his way homeward at the close of the work for the day; he fell in company with a traveller, whose weary step betokened fatigue, and whose countenance, depression. The farmer entered into conversation with the stranger, upon topics of a cheerful character. He went out of his way to cheer the lone pilgrim, and left him pursuing his journey with a lighter step, and a more animated countenance.

It was kind in the farmer to cheer the weary traveller. We should imitate his example. We should cheer the weary traveller in life's journey.

We can do it by sympathy. In life's journey, the heart is often more weary than the head or the limb. A burden lies upon the spirit. It lightens that burden to feel that there are those who care for us—who sympathize with us. A kindly expression of interest has kept many a heart from sinking under its burden.

We can do it by encouragement. Said one who was an ornament to the profession of law, but who in early life had to struggle with poverty and neglect, "I was on the point of abandoning my profession and betaking myself to a manual employment for a livelihood, when a few encouraging remarks from a distinguished member of the bar determined me to persevere." In every department of life, a few encouraging words from those who have been successful will cheer and strengthen those who may be ready to faint from discouragement.

We can do it by assistance. No one is so busy but that, if disposed, he can find some time to help him who is in need. If we are watchful for opportunities for lending a helping hand—for doing good—we shall not fail to find them. There is no more blessed employment than that of extending a benevolent hand to the aid of the faint and weary.

UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES.

When our young bloods throw away their half-smoked Havanas on the way home at night, or down town in the morning, they probably think that is the last of them. If so, the idea is erroneous. The *tobacco-scavengers* pick them up. Miserable old men and women *glean* these leavings of luxury from the gutters and sidewalks in the early morning, and either solace themselves with the discarded abominations in their own squalid abodes, or sell them for a few pence or a modicum of cold victuals to paupers of more expensive habits. We have seen an area-beggar with as much as a quart of segar stumps in the corner of her basket—the nicotic result of a single morning's tramp in the fashionable thoroughfares. Some of the pickers-up and the purchasers of "old soldiers"—as these relics are technically called—use them as smokables, some chew them, and others convert them into snuff. It is not an uncommon thing to find on the persons of vagrants sent to the work-house on Blackwell's Island a dozen or so of these delicacies; and when deprived of them, in conformity with a standing rule of the institution, they sometimes shed tears. Perhaps it may be gratifying to the consumers of costly fumigants to know that their investments yield a filthy dividend to poor outcasts with the same unsavory proclivities as themselves. "Extremes meet," we are told, and how could the saying be more forcibly exemplified than by a partnership between Fifth Avenue and the Five Points, in a "Concha" or a "Regalia!"

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WAR.

The cause of the war which resulted in the conquest of Algiers by France, is not generally known. The quarrel originated thus: A large amount of money remitted from Spain via Algiers, in payment of a debt due from the Spanish government to a Marseilles merchant named Bacri, was seized *in transitu* by the Dey. The French government (it was during Louis Philippe's reign) remonstrated, and demanded restitution. This was refused. War was then declared by France, Algiers taken, and the French colony of Algeria established on the wreck of the Mussulman principality. Thirty millions of francs were found in the Dey's coffers. Of course, surmises the reader, the first act of the conquering power was to indemnify the citizen, the denial of whose just claim on the part of Algiers had led to the war. Not a bit of it. With an inconsistency peculiar to tyrants, Louis Philippe refused to pay a single franc to the individual of whose rights he had been the champion, and about six weeks ago M. Bacri died in extreme poverty at Marseilles, with his just demands unsatisfied. He had been for years dependent upon charity, and was buried at the public expense. Such is the justice of monarchs. War was made to compel the payment of a just debt to a private citizen; the government obtained a large amount of spoil and a vast accession of territory; the private citizen whose wrongs were the *casus belli* died a pauper! Such is the philosophy of the conflicts waged by despotisms.

MY CREED.

Am I to admire a person, a picture, a poem or a play, merely because *not* to do so is to be considered wanting in good taste? I trow not. With regard to the last, to my way of thinking, plays were never intended to be read. Nine-tenths of the people who go mad about Shakspeare are only the remainder sheep, who jump over the wall because their leader has done so, and for no other reason. I say *nine* tenths; the other tenth, I doubt not, are quite as sincere as I am. I boldly declare, at the point of the bayonet, that *I* can't read Shakspeare. I hate all your "what ho there's," and "excellent wretches," and "go to's," and "prithee's," and "good my lords," and "canonized bones" and things. When anybody says to me in honest Saxon, Fanny, how d'ye do? I understand it; if they say, Fanny, I love you, I understand it, and don't blame 'em; but I don't want them to be forever turning up the whites of their eyes at the moon, and calling on Venus and the Dipper to witness how willingly they would shed their heart's "*ball*ud" for me. I don't wan't them to be making pin-cushions of themselves to stick daggers in, every time I look at a strange hose and doublet. If a man was going to kill me, I shouldn't naturally expect he would stand and hold a conversation with the "ever-burning sun" or the "*farmament*" mortal hours before he finished me; at any rate, I'm not the woman to stay curled up in a heap, with one expectant paw in the air, waiting my "doom" till that oration is over; he could take his time to talk to the "firmament" when I was "a damp, unpleasant body." Stuff; don't talk to me about Shakspeare; he has said some things, I know, *but not one that is not better said in a book that will live long after his is forgotten.*

Now, as to pictures. Am I to be squelched by technicalities? Don't I know what pleases *me*, and am I going to talk idiotic "pre-Raphaelite" prattle after that point is settled? As to the opera, I've delivered myself before on that subject; but when I do go, if anybody sees me reading a "book of the opera" to find out what the music and its accessories ought to tell me of itself, if it *is* music, I'll let you know. As to books, when people write about "the amethystine light of iridescent eyes," I am ready to be borne gently out on the first shutter, and though the author of a late philosophical work has written such lovely human things as make my heart leap toward him, he is yet capable of affected paragraphs that won't hold water in any climate.

From my youth up, I've hated "parties." I never went to one that paid for the bore of dressing. I like a cosy group of true friends, in their easiest attitudes, oldest clothes, and most slipshod thoughts, with such fare as the gods send. I don't believe in the Mutual Admiration Society, here or elsewhere, or in ice-creams. In short, I detest all description of froth. Life *might* be so magnificent if we were not so trammeled by idiotic formalities, and so besottedly bent upon appearing everything that we are *not*. Speaking of formalities brings to my mind "New Year's Day," when, in the language of the daguerreotypist, each person is expected "to assume the smiling expression which they wish recorded." The very idea of wearing one's best bib and tucker, and that "smiling expression," from eleven in the forenoon till midnight, varying the performance only by an alternate "how d'ye do, and will you take some refreshment?" to each person who feels obliged to go through the Gotham-honored bore of boring you, is absurdity itself. When anybody will compute for me how many social martyrs rush through a thousand New York parlors on New Year's day, to get a conscience "*quit-claim*" from calling again till the *next* anniversary, I will agree that it is a good custom. Any rational conversation with one's friends, ever so fragmentary, under such circumstances, is impossible. In my opinion, it is a weariness to the flesh, both to the caller and the called on. Any *other* day, Messieurs, when you feel in the mood, your humble servant will be most happy.

FANNY FERN.

FORGOT IT.

"As you are going to the river you will be likely to meet Mr. Simpson: he said he should be home about midnight. Tell him the bridge is gone, that he may come by the upper road."

"I'll tell him, if I see him," was the reply.

He did see Mr. Simpson, but it was while he was disposing of his wheat, and he forgot to tell him about the bridge. The consequence was, that in the darkness of the night, Mr. Simpson drove into the swollen stream, and lost his horses, and came very near losing his life.

A great deal of harm is done through forgetfulness. A little thoughtfulness and care with respect to others would often save them from a great deal of suffering, and aid them in their work.

A man is discouraged in consequence of the difficulties he meets with. An encouraging word may be all that is necessary to revive his energies, and to cause him to persevere. That word were easily spoken. There are those who are perfectly willing to speak it, but they do not think of it. They are busy with their own work. The discouraged one sinks into deeper despondency, not through their heartlessness, but their want of thoughtfulness.

A young man is exposed to temptation. He is about to take a step from which a little influence of the right kind will save him. There are numbers among his acquaintances who could exert that influence. But they do not see his danger, or are so busy that they must leave him to the care of his other friends. He takes the step, and it leads to his ruin. A little effort rightly put forth would have saved him.

SERVED HIM RIGHT.

One pleasant afternoon recently, we saw a crowd gathered around an omnibus in Broadway, and on inquiring what was the trouble, we were informed that a man who had insulted a lady in the omnibus had just been "pitched out" by the gentlemen passengers. It seems that the offender, who was a stalwart, well-dressed brute, made an insulting remark to a young lady sitting by his side, whereupon she arose to pull the strap for the driver to stop. A gentleman sitting opposite, seeing by her manner that something unpleasant had occurred, courteously inquired if she *wished* to alight, to which she replied that she did not, but that she could not ride further with *that man*—(pointing to the wretch)—who had insulted her. At this announcement the proverbial American gallantry of the four gentlemen in the omnibus was aroused, and respectfully requesting the young lady to be seated, they ordered the offender to quit the vehicle. To this he defiantly objected, whereupon they seized him by the neck, arms and legs, and after a short but vigorous struggle, pitched him head foremost to the pavement, where he was taken in charge by the crowd that had collected, and hustled and cuffed to such a degree, that he will doubtless never insult another lady while a gentleman is in sight or hearing.

EVEN the calming and restoring influence of religion cannot wholly lull the troubled agony of a memory burthened with crime.

THOUGHTS AS THEY OCCUR.—No. 79.

BY ONE WHO KEEPS HIS EYES AND EARS OPEN.

CONCERNING THE PLEASURES OF BENEVOLENCE.

The Pleasures of Memory have been celebrated, and the Pleasures of Hope, and of the Imagination. Is it not time to write the Pleasures of Benevolence? It should, of course, be done in poetry. As that is quite beyond our reach, we must submit to the humbler task of furnishing some materials for the future poet.

He will, of course, descant upon the satisfaction of doing good; the consciousness of well-spent hours and means. He will take us to the chambers of want, and to the dwellings of the poor, and recount the joy, the tears of gratitude, which follow timely benevolence.

But, all wheat grows in chaff. And sometimes the chaff is out of all proportion to the wheat. It may be said that benevolence and imposition go hand in hand. The police detective sees much of the inside deceit of life; but, we suspect, scarcely more than those do who are called to deal with suppliants for relief. *The great obstacle in the way of charity, is the intolerable imposition of cunning mendicants.* In our great cities, where wealth is abundant, there is a very general disposition to be kind, and to employ some portion of wealth to the relief of suffering. We know not how it is with others, but in our own case, after ten years' experience, we have come to the conclusion that nineteen-twentieths of the applications for charity are unworthy of any consideration. It would be better to throw the money into the fire than to reward the deceit of men, women and children that have made charity a capital for swindling.

Among the invariable cheats have been young men asking help to get to another city, or to get home. We do not doubt that many honest persons have found themselves in New York without means of getting away. But such persons have never honored us with a call. We have given (oh that it were in our pocket again!) a good deal more than was creditable to our good sense, to persons who needed, two, and three, and five dollars, to get to Albany, Boston, or Philadelphia, and who would at once refund. And *in not one single instance*, have we ever had a man keep his promise. We have shut up that door. Young men *sacked* in New York have our affectionate sympathy, and our advice to *walk* home, or to *work* their way.

We never knew an honest Jew to beg. And we never knew a Jew that *did* beg that was honest. There are, we suspect, few Jews addicted to mendicity. The Jewish people are self-helpful; and they are apt to care for their worthy poor themselves; and not to suffer them to be cast on Christian charity.

It is very seldom that a New Englander openly and avowedly begs. If they do, it is in cases where the intellect is feeble; or when they have become discouraged and regardless of character. Yankee begging belongs to another class, and is marked by that ingenuity and shrewdness which belongs to New England people. In fact, the more intellectual classes of all nations are averse to begging.

The same is true of Germans. As a class they are industrious, frugal, and self-respecting. They almost never come to our doors for money. Sometimes they solicit provisions, and have a round of patrons whose doors they serve to accept broken food, as regularly as carriers of newspapers.

Italians are the professional beggars, when they beg at all. We suspect that very few in proportion to the whole number among us are mendicants. They earn their living. But the professional Italian mendicant, sitting at some convenient recept of custom, is not unknown in New York.

But these are only the lower forms of mendicity—vulgar, witless, brainless. The ingenuities by which money is abstracted from our pocket and put in another, are among the triumphs of the human intellect.

A well dressed, bluff, seaman-like fellow calls to say, that he has just arrived in port from Liverpool. A gentleman there wished to send you a saddle of mutton. He had put it in the ice house, and kept it carefully, and it would be sent over without any expense to you, by the steward, within an hour. He had only called on his way to see his family, to let you know the source of the present, when it should arrive. He starts briskly for the door and is very shy of reaching out his hand for a small fee of gratitude, and yet, seeing you importunate, "he *will* buy some little thing for one of the children with it," and hopes you will enjoy English mutton—which hope you echo, the echo growing less and less every hour, until you are forced to express yourself unfavorably of that man's character!

Books are good corkscrews for the pocket. You pay four or five prices to persons who *present* you with books. Of course, they did not calculate upon your generosity.

Then, some man has on hand a poor fellow whom he cannot get rid of, and does not like to support in chief. He organizes a joint-stock company of relief, in this wise: Drawing up a little note of introduction, he puts down five or ten dollars, and sends him to several people of his circle and standing, in a way that obliges you to honor the drawer of the note. One opens the paper, and runs his eye over Dr. A., Rev. W. H. C. and X., over your neighbor's name, and several others. Now every man of them, except the first, signed because he did not wish to refuse a friend, or because he did not like to have all those persons know that he only had refused; and you give your money and a blessing reversed to the respectable mendicant.

There is a large business done by *trading* mendicants. A Hungarian, strong of tobacco and brandy, brings you some rare specimens of Bohemian glass, obtained from an uncle, which he is enabled to sell you, on that account, and on account of your known sympathy for his distressed country, for twice as much as you would have to give at the store in New York, where he has just bought it.

Distressed Englishmen, who have a few rare pictures, clung to through all reverses, offer to part with these heirlooms, if you will advance *half* their worth, (which is ten times their value,) and allow them to redeem them when a remittance from England comes. The remittance never comes, and the detestable picture stays.

Men who are known to be kind are studied just as are the habits of fish or game by sportsmen. One sort of men come in on you late Saturday night; they are about to be turned into the street—have no bread for Sunday. They knew that you would not go out to investigate—that you would rather risk a little than permit such suffering. Others take Sunday, and at church, follow up a sermon with an unexpected invitation to practice what you preach! Nothing can be more exquisitely skillful. A church door beg will extract what cannot be touched in any other way. But time would fail to tell the endless fertilities of real want or simulated want; of lies, half lies, quarter-truths; of vulgar begging, refined solicitation, and exquisite swindling, which belong to the experiences of Benevolence. The pious begging is itself a science. But that requires a chapter of its own.

HEAR BOTH SIDES.—"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

SCRIPTURE POEM, BY N. P. WILLIS.

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.

"Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?" I. Kings. Chap. XVII.

'Twas evening, and the prophet of the Lord
Cover'd his face in silence, as he turn'd
From the imploring looks of famish'd men,
In the still streets of Zarephath. The years
Of famine, when the sky should be as brass,
And the earth turn'd to ashes—as foretold
By him, for the idolatries of Baal—
Were measuring in woe their days accurs'd—
Morning a hopelessness and night despair—
And, from the brook at Cherith he had come,
Fed until then by ravens at the brook;
But now, obedient to the Word that said
"Go hence and dwell in Zarephath, to be
My witness in their midst!" And, day by day,
He walk'd amid the multitude accurs'd,
And look'd on their unutterable woe—
Sadly, but with the errand of his God
Remember'd in his silence.
Twilight fell,
And, to the humble dwelling where was kept
For holy charity the prophet's room,
The house which bore the blessing of the meal
Never decreasing and the cruse of oil
Watch'd by the angels that it should not fail,
Elijah turn'd his steps. The narrow door
Swung with the lifted latch, and there, as wont,
Was spread the table with its frugal meal—
As yet untasted, but spread first for him,
By the poor widow's self-forgetting thought.
Kind was the care, that eve—but yet, not all
Of the accustom'd welcoming was there.
The gentle voice to bless him as he cross'd
The threshold; the humility that knelt
To take the sandals from his weary feet;
The hand to break the bread and pour the oil;
And that which had grown sweet, as, day by day,
It help'd to wile the burthen from his thought,
The joyous child's awaiting his caress,
And, with his infant eagerness of play,
Aiding his mother's service to their guest—
These were not there! Hush'd was the low-roof'd room!
The prophet and his sadness were alone.

Night came, and the unalterable stars
Shone on the famine. And the prophet knelt
By the low casement, and look'd out on heaven;
And pray'd that they beneath that humble roof
Who had been wont to kneel beside him there—
The widow of Zarephath and her son—
Might, from the curse, be spar'd. But, as the words
Fell from his lips, there rose a sudden cry
From out the inner chamber, where the boy
Had, since the morn, lain sick—a sharp, wild cry,
As of a heart's first yielding to despair—
Delirious in the utterance of its woe—
And forth came she for whom the prophet pray'd,
Bearing the lifeless burthen in her arms,
And stood and look'd upon him. "*What have I
To do with thee!* despairingly she cried;
*Why hast thou come to me, thou Man of God!
Is it to call my secret sin once more
To my remembrance that my son is slain!*"

And, as she sank upon her knees and press'd
Her face upon the child's, the prophet laid
His hand upon the close-enfolding arms
Veil'd in the falling tresses of her hair;
And, in the scarce-lost cadence of his words
Just utter'd unto God, he calmly said:—
"*Give me thy son!*" And, silently she rais'd
Her wilder'd eyes, and look'd upon his face—
Loosing her dead to him, with wondering trust—
A hope born in her heart, she knew not why;—
And, to the little chamber in the roof,
Where he might lay the child upon his bed,
And be alone to wrestle with his God,
The prophet bore him from her sight.
And there,
At his soul's altar, by the humble bed,
Where morn and eve he knelt—alone with God—
Elijah fell upon his knees and pray'd.
He pray'd for her whose mercies unto him,
While he sojourn'd in Zarephath, had been
Shar'd with the angels—ministering wings
Bringing unseen the widow's meal and oil—
For her who hop'd, in silence and in fear,
Since she had been thus chosen of the Lord
To give his servant bread, that, of her sin
Wept o'er in secret, she had been forgiven.
Of all the dwellers in the land accurs'd
She only, in his sojourn, had been blest;
And should the curse now fall on her belov'd—
Child of her sorrow—should her son be slain?

And when, with holy agony and tears,
Elijah had sent up his prayer to God,
He rose, and stretch'd himself upon the child,
And said:—"*Oh Lord my God, I pray to thee,
Let the child's soul come unto him again!*"

And the Lord heard Elijah's voice. And, lo!
The parted soul return'd unto the child!
And he awoke, as from a gentle sleep,
And smil'd as if in memory of a dream.
And, lifting him once more, the prophet drew
The lov'd one closer to his heart, and came
From his lone chamber to the lower room;
And gave him to his mother's arms, and said:—
"*See! thy son liveth!*"
Lesson sweet to read,
In the inspirings of the Holy Book—
That the one home to which the blessing came,
When famine had made desolate the land,
Was this—the humble one wherein was kept,
With hospitable care, the prophet's room—
The widow's shelter to the man of God
Staying the wasting of her meal and oil!
Sweet is the lesson, that the prophet's prayer
For the poor widow, while beneath her roof,
Turned even Death's dark shadow from the door!
But oh, the sweetest lesson of it all,
Is the bright proof, that, in the eye of heaven,
The "sin as scarlet may be white as snow"—
That, of Zarephath's tribe, the chosen one,
First to have honor at the hand of God—
She who should meet his prophet at the gate,
And, with the angels, minister to him—
That she was one, who, tho' she fear'd the Lord,
Had still a troubled memory at her heart—
A WOMAN WHO HAD SINN'D AND WAS FORGIVEN!

DIRT AND DISHONESTY.

We have it on high authority that cleanliness is akin to godliness; and it is equally certain that dirt and dishonesty are intimately related. The best child alive could be demoralized by personal uncleanliness and ragged attire; and it is probable that the foulest "mud larks" that roam our gutters could be ennobled in character by persistent purifications and satisfactory wardrobes. Who has not observed the repugnance of some bright, little girl to the wearing of even a rumpled apron to school, on the ground that she would be charged with slovenliness by "the girls," or on the higher ground that "anything mussed made her crawl all over." This is the instinctive protest of nature against the degradation of untidiness; and children that have become content with uncleanness are ripe for the manipulations of the infernal powers. We, of course, do not refer to what the little ones call "clean dirt," that is, the "ground stain" and rumpling of clothes incurred in childish sports; these do no harm in well-ordered families, where the children begin every day afresh in cleanliness and comfort. But dirty dirt is always and forever not only an abomination but a handmaid of sin.

A NEW STORY, BY ANNA CORA RITCHIE.—In the next number of the LEDGER we shall commence an elegant story entitled, "THE MUTE SINGER," by Anna Cora Ritchie. The scene is laid in Paris, and the story is written in the gifted authoress's best vein.

THANKFULNESS.

BY ALICE CARY.

I thank thee, Gracious Lord,
For the divine award
Of strength that helps me up the heavy hights
Of mortal sorrow, where, through tears forlorn,
My eyes get glimpses of the authentic lights
Of love's eternal morn.

For thereby do I trust
That our afflictions spring not from the dust,
And that they are not sent
In arbitrary chastisement,
Nor yet as murderers to put out the light
And let our souls loose in some damnéd night
That holds the balance of thy glory just;
But rather, that as lessons they are meant,
And as the fire tempers the iron, so
Are we refined by wo.

I thank Thee for my common blessings, still
Rained through thy will
Upon my head, the air
That knows so many tunes which grief beguile,
Breathing its light love to me everywhere,
And that will still be kissing all the while.

I thank Thee that my childhood's vanished days
Were cast in rural ways,
Where I beheld, with gladness ever new,
That sort of vagrant Dew
Which lodges in the beggarly tents of such
Vile weeds as virtuous plants disdain to touch,
And with rough-bearded burs, night after night,
Upgathered by the morning, tender and true,
Into her clear, chaste light.

Such ways I learned to know
That free will cannot go
Outside of mercy—learned to bless his name
Whose revelations, ever thus renewed
Along the varied year, in field and wood,
His loving care proclaim.

I thank Thee that the grass and the red rose
Do what they can to tell
How spirit through all forms of matter flows—
For every thistle by the common way
Wearing its homely beauty—for each spring
That sweet and homeless, runneth where it will—
For night and day,
For the alternate seasons—everything
Pertaining to life's marvelous miracle.

Even for the lowly flower
That, living, dwarfed and bent
Under some beetling rock, in gloom profound,
Far from her pretty sisters of the ground,
And shut from sun and shower,
Seemeth endowed with human discontent.

Ah! what a tender hold
She taketh of us in our own despite—
A sadly-solemn creature
Crooked, despoiled of nature,
Leaning from out the shadows, dull and cold,
To lay her little white face in the light.

The chopper going by her rude abode,
Thinks of his own rough hut, his old wife's smile,
And of the bare young feet
That run through th' frost to meet
His coming, and forgets the weary load
Of sticks that bends his shoulders down the while.

I thank Thee, Lord, that nature is so wise,
So capable of painting in men's eyes
Pictures whose airy hues
Do blend and interfuse
With all the darkness that about us lies—
That clearly in our hearts
Her law she writes,
Reserving cunning past our mortal arts,
Whereby she is avenged for all her slights.

I thank Thee, Lord, for every saddest cross;
Gain comes to us through loss,
The while we go,
Blind travellers holding by the wall of time,
And feeling out through wo
The hues of things eternal and sublime.

THE MYSTERIOUS MARRIAGE.

BY E. A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "LOST DEEDS," "PLANTER'S DAUGHTER," &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The days passed on, and it wanted but two more to the one appointed for the completion of the sacrifice. The unhappy bride-elect sat beside her window in the gathering twilight, and watched the deepening shadows without, in her own mind comparing them to the darkness which was so rapidly settling over her earthly hopes.

Clara had declined going down to supper, but her maid was sent up with a waiter of refreshments, which were at once rejected, and the command given to take them away, together with the light she had brought with them. Kate obeyed her; she placed them on a table outside of the door, and re-entering, rapidly approached Miss Euston, and threw herself upon her knees before her. She said, in a voice of deep emotion:

"Forgive me, Miss Clara, and let me help you out of this trouble. Oh! if I had thought things could have come to this pass, I would have killed myself before I would have helped your uncle to get you away from New York. Only trust me, darling Miss Clara, and I can get you out of his clutches yet."

She listened vaguely, and wearily replied:

"Go away, Kate. The evil is done; and you have not now the power to remedy it. You can never circumvent the plans of my uncle and his unprincipled confederate. Go away—I am tired, and ill."

"But if I can't do it, Miss Clara, somebody else can," replied Kate, energetically. "I saw a friend of yours to-day, and he is ready to risk his life to rescue you."

"He? who?" asked Clara, in a more hopeful manner. "Oh! Kate, I am afraid you are deceiving me again."

"Upon my life, my honor, I am not! I have here a note from Mr. Ashton, who is watching for a chance to see you. Shall I bring the light back that you may read it?"

Clara sank back almost fainting from the sudden revulsion of feeling. Kate hastened to bring back the rejected supper, and while she held the light, her young lady read a few hurried lines, written certainly by the hand of Charles Ashton. They seemed like a revelation from heaven, for they afforded a hope of deliverance from the miserable fate that lay before her.

Her pale cheek flushed to the hue of the rose as she read one portion of his note, and her eyes rested upon it several moments before she spoke. At length she raised her eyes searchingly to the face of the girl, and impressively asked:

"You are not playing me false again, Kate?"

"No, no. Trust to me, Miss Clara, to get you out of this, and I will be true to you as steel."

"I *must* do so, Kate; for that is my only hope now. The means of writing to my friends have been removed from me, and you must be the bearer of a message to Mr. Ashton. Tell him I will implicitly follow his directions and accept his advice; that I trust to him to remove me from my uncle's power; and I will consent to any measures he may think necessary to effect my rescue from the thraldom in which I am held. You will remember exactly what I say, Kate?"

"I will, Miss Clara. I shall see him to-night in the summer-house on the lawn, and I will bring you news that will brighten you up, I'll warrant."

A few more words were exchanged between them, and then the girl hurried away, fearful that if she remained too long with her young lady, suspicion would be aroused against her, and she herself watched in such a manner as to baffle her efforts to serve her.

On the following morning Clara appeared at breakfast, looking more cheerful and composed than she had lately been; and in reply to some allusion to her approaching marriage, to the great delight of Mr. Euston, she said:

"I think it right, uncle, to inform you of the change in my views on this subject. I have made up my mind to the necessity of being married immediately; but I ask as a favor that I may be permitted to be alone as much as possible until Thursday evening arrives. Let Kate come to me; you are not afraid to trust her, I suppose?"

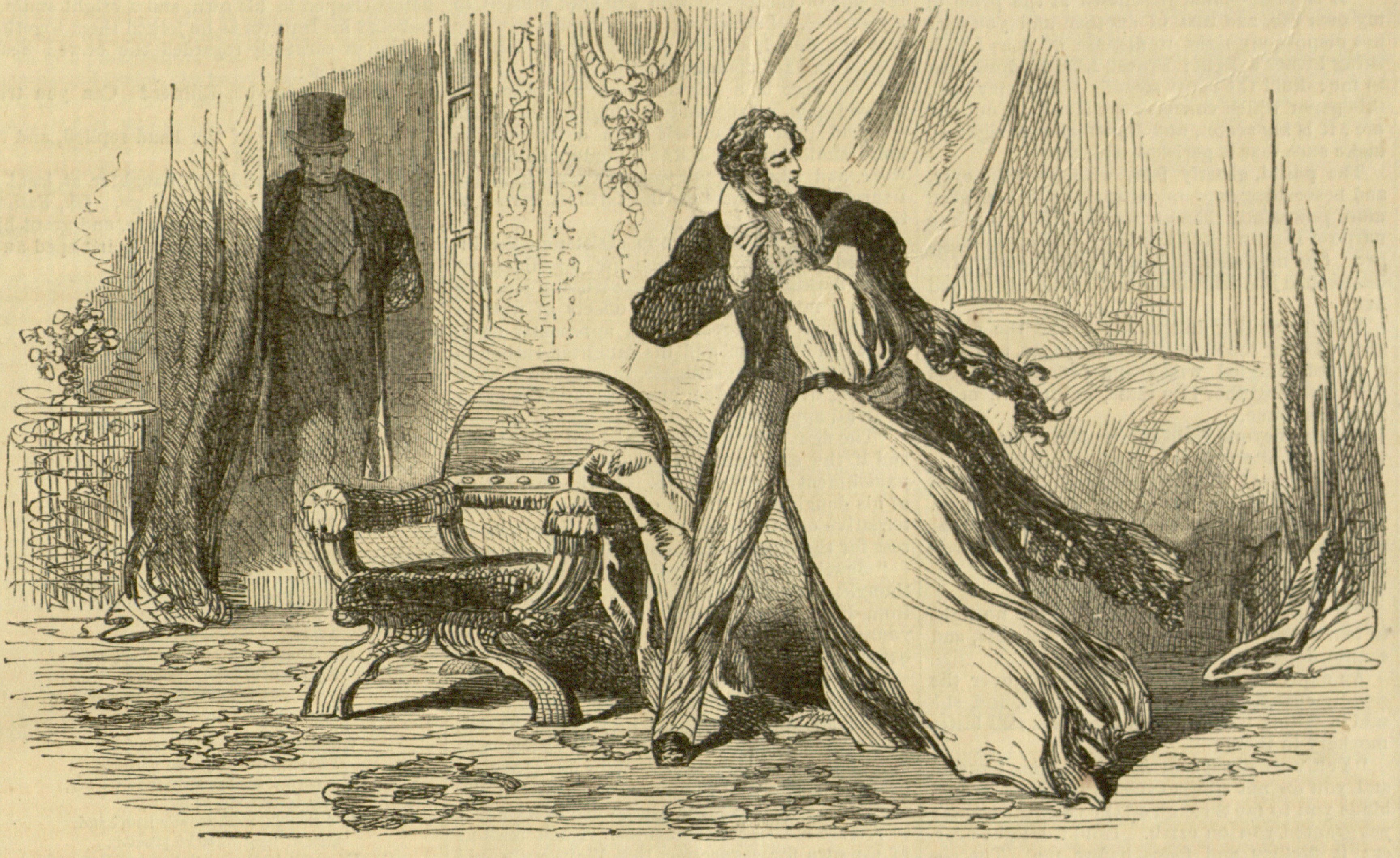
"No; I have no fears about Kate's fidelity to me. She is a true, good girl, and strongly attached to you, as her eagerness to advance your best interests has proved. I cannot express my gratification, Clara, at this wise resolution on your part. Lumley will be the happiest of men. He has overslept himself this morning, but when I carry him this news, I am sure it will effectually arouse him."

Clara repressed the inward shudder that thrilled her frame at his name, and said:

"I stipulate that Mr. Lumley shall not approach me till we meet before the clergyman; after that, if he chooses, he can express his raptures at my acquiescence in your views."

Mrs. Euston would have expressed her delight, but Clara shrank away from her, and abruptly left the room. That lady was, however, too astute not to suspect some *ruse* hidden beneath this sudden submission, and Clara found that a stricter watch than before was kept upon her movements.

The day was passed in alternations of hope and fear, that kept her in a state of agitation which was most distressing. It seemed to her that the hours were lengthened out indefinitely; and when the sun at last sank beneath the horizon, she felt as if a weight was lifted from her soul, but only to return with crushing power as the fear now assailed her that her preserver might find it impossible to carry out the plan he had resolved on as the surest means of withdrawing her from the protection of her uncle.



THE DELIVERER.

The windows of Clara's room opened upon a balcony, supported by an iron net-work, which offered a secure footing to an active person. At midnight the watch upon her was relaxed, and Kate only remained in her room as a guard, while the rest of the household was buried in sleep. The waning moon glittered above the dark tree-tops, and faintly lighted two figures that glided across the lawn, and after reconnoitering the house, advanced with swift steps towards the balcony. To gain the floor above was the work of a moment to these light and agile forms, and, in a brief space, the two stood within Clara's chamber. The moonlight fell through the open window, and a white figure that stood beside it, half fainting with emotion, was clasped within a pair of strong arms, and words of love, hope, and re-assurance were uttered in low, passionate tones, to which the overwrought girl could only reply by a violent burst of tears.

"Forgive me," she at length found voice to say; "I was childish and silly, but I loved you through all. I do not give myself to you as the only means of escaping a more odious doom. My heart goes with my hand."

"Thanks, darling, for the assurance, but it was not needed. Rivers, we may be interrupted, you had better perform your part in the agreement at once."

The companion of Ashton, who had stood in the shadow of the window, came forward, and Kate stood near her mistress while a few important sentences were uttered: a ring was placed upon Clara's finger, a kiss pressed fervently upon her lips, and she felt that she need no longer fear the pretensions of the detested Lumley.

The two intruders swung themselves down as they had come up, and Clara watched their receding figures until they were lost beneath the shadows of the trees. She then threw herself upon her bed, weeping as if her heart would break. Kate endeavored to comfort her with assurances that they would get off in safety; but even while she was speaking the deep-mouthed bay of a watch-dog was heard—there was a rush below upon the lawn, and fire-arms were discharged.

Voices were heard talking in loud and excited tones, and presently steps hurriedly approached Miss Euston's room. Almost beside herself with apprehension, Kate threw a coverlet over her young lady, to make it appear as if she had retired to bed, while she said:

"Stop crying, Miss Clara, for the sake of the holy saints, and pretend that you've just waked up. Oh, Lord! what shall we do now?"

"Do nothing; say I am ill, and you are waiting upon me; it will be true enough; and find out who is hurt. I shall die if anything has happened to *him* or his companion."

A knock came to her door, and Mr. Euston entered, while several negroes stood looking into the room. He called to Clara, who faintly answered, and coming to her bedside, he looked down on her, and said:

"You are safe in bed, I see, my dear. I only came up to re-assure you about the noise below. Old Felix saw two men prowling in the shrubbery, and he fired at them; that is all."

"And was any one kilt, sir?" asked Kate, with seeming simplicity.

"I do not think any one was hurt, for there is no appearance of blood anywhere, though that might easily be concealed by the long grass. But I am of the opinion that Felix was dreaming. Good night, Clara; go to sleep, and look handsome to-morrow as you should upon your bridal day."

He left the room, and Kate crept to the window and looked out; a sentinel was placed beneath it, who kept a watch upon the balcony the remainder of the night.

Many fears for the safety of those who had left her assailed poor Clara's mind; but toward morning, in spite of her uncertainty, she fell into a light slumber, from which she awoke refreshed, and nerved for the events that lay folded in the next twelve hours of her life. She trembled at the possibility of what might occur, but she had sufficient faith in him she trusted to believe that he would remove her safely and honorably from her intolerable captivity.

At breakfast she managed to retain an appearance of calmness and self-possession, and on her return to her own apartment Mrs. Euston came in, followed by her maid, bearing a splendid lace dress looped with pearls, and a magnificent *parure* of the same jewels to complete her adornment as a bride.

They were so beautiful that Clara examined them with interest, and something of her old girlish vivacity shone forth as she listened with complacency to the flatteries and praises lavished upon her by her former friend.

Every suspicion in the mind of Mrs. Euston was completely set at rest. She concluded that when Clara found the match forced upon her was unavoidable, she had made up her mind to accept cheerfully the fate which she could not avert. She listened to the loving messages of Lumley with a half smile, the expression of which was inscrutable to the astute woman of the world; she, however, thought that a few more hours would make all safe, so what did it signify what that smile might mean?

The day wore away scarcely less tediously than its predecessor, and as the shadows of evening fell, Kate busied herself in arraying her young lady in her bridal robes. The fitful color came and went upon the delicate cheek, but in the sweet eyes was a light which surely never shone there as a greeting to Alfred Lumley as her future husband. The misty lace fell like foam wreaths around her light form, orange flowers bound her hair, and the filmy vail could not conceal the rapid changes in her complexion as every noise sent the blood in vivid carnation to her cheeks, or caused it to recede, leaving her fair as a snow-drift, and nearly as cold. Hope and fear contended in her bosom for the mastery, for she knew that on the events of the next hour all the happiness of her life depended.

Mr. Euston came to conduct her to the drawing-room, where a marriage contract was to be read in both Spanish and English, and then signed, before the ceremony could take place.

There had been some slight difficulty in finding a Protestant clergyman; but at length the services of a young Englishman, who had recently settled in the neighborhood, were secured, and Clara started as her eyes fell on him; an intelligent glance passed between them, and she passed on to the upper end of the room.

Lumley, most elaborately dressed, and looking quite radiant in his self-complacency, advanced to meet her, and she submitted to be led by him to the seat beside Mrs. Euston, who, brilliant in smiles and beauty, sat triumphant.

The notary who had drawn up the contract drawled through it, and Clara listened with a painful tension of the nerves for the sounds which would herald her deliverance from the unreal mockery proceeding before her.

No sound of an arrival came, and she felt at intervals as if she would faint; but the necessity for self-control forced her to regain calmness; to maintain it, even when Lumley took her hand, drew her forward, and motioned to the clergyman to commence the marriage ceremony.

But he seemed suffering from painful indecision, and stood with his eyes rivetted with intense solicitude upon the door. Impatient at his delay, Mr. Euston at last spoke:

"Come, sir; we are waiting on you. The bridal couple are quite ready for you to proceed with your duty."

Thus admonished, he slowly advanced—unclosed his prayer book, and looked into the face of the half-sinking bride. She met his glance with one of mute questioning, and he abruptly closed the book, and said, in a clear, sonorous voice:

"I cannot unite this woman in the bonds of marriage with him who stands beside her, for I have already given her to be the wife of another man within the last twenty-four hours. Ah! here he comes at last to claim her."

Before a word could be uttered by the half paralyzed group to whom this sudden announcement was made, Ashton advanced into the room, drew Clara's arm from that of Lumley, and encircling her form with his protecting arm, said:

"It is too late to perform the marriage rites between this lady and another person, for she is already my wife, as my friend Mr. Rivers can testify. Mr. Euston, I would gladly have been saved from the necessity of this clandestine course, but your tyranny toward your niece left me no alternative. Only as my *wife* could I assert a claim to Clara superior to yours, and I penetrated to her room last night in company with Mr. Rivers, who united us in the presence of Kate Kelly."

Mr. Euston was dumb with rage, and Lumley thrust his hand into his bosom for a concealed weapon he always carried there. Ashton saw the movement, and caught his wrist with a grasp of iron as he said:

"I would advise you, Alfred Lumley, to be very careful what you do. I have a warrant for your apprehension sent from New York, and I have only to raise my hand to have it executed. You are accused of conspiring against the life of your cousin, and claiming his inheritance; falsely asserting yourself to be the son of Thomas Lumley, when I have ample proof that you are only his nephew."

"'Tis false—who dares accuse me of such double dealing? 'Tis *he* who is the pretender, and I am the rightful heir."

"Come forward, Mr. Atkins, and show this man how useless such bravado is."

The ex-police officer, whom Lumley thought entirely devoted to his interests, appeared in the doorway, and the detected sharper grew white as death.

"You here, Atkins? What does this conspiracy against me mean?" he huskily asked.

"It only means that you have been tracked by me through every step you've taken for months past, and you only avoided being nabbed before you left New York by going off so suddenly. I soon found the clue again, and followed you up; old Spring knows all your dodges, so you needn't hold out any false light."

At length Mr. Euston found voice to ask:

"What does this mean?"

"That you've been regularly bamboozled by a pretty woman, as many an old chap has been before you, sir; and that you have come mighty nigh giving your niece to a good-for-nothing scamp," said Atkins.

Ashton made a sign to him to be silent, and placing Clara on a seat, he took Mr. Euston aside, and said to him:

"This man is not the son of Thomas Lumley—he is a swindler and an adventurer; but you have married his sister, and for the sake of that connection, and the name he bears, I will permit him to escape the penalty due to his conduct."

"His *sister!* you speak in riddles, sir; I cannot understand you," gasped the bewildered dupe, with an expression of doubt and anguish upon his face which was pitiable to behold. "I—I am quite in the dark as to the meaning of all this."

A soft voice spoke beside him, and a light touch that could lead him through the world, fell upon his arm.

"Mr. Euston—dear husband, let me explain in private. I have much to unfold to you; much to be forgiven; but I feel assured that you will not be inexorable toward your own Lonore. You have defeated me, Mr. Ashton—take your bride and go—this house is no longer a shelter for you."

She led the trembling old man away, who seemed either unable or unwilling to resist the subtle power that guided him whithersoever she willed. They paused a brief moment before Clara; Mrs. Euston mournfully regarded her, and then said:

"Adieu, Clara; be happy, and forget how deeply I would have injured you. I loved you, too, though you will probably not believe it."

Clara impulsively grasped her hand.

"I forgive you—indeed I do."

Lonore stooped forward, lightly kissed her brow, and taking a spray of flowers from her hair, passed on with a firm and proud step. Lumley had already disappeared.

A carriage was at the door, into which Clara stepped, followed by her two friends. A second one came after it, occupied by Kate and the trunks which she had prepared for this escapade.

During the drive to the cottage occupied by the family of Mr. Rivers, Ashton explained how he came so opportunely to the rescue of his bride. He had been sent to Cuba to discover all that could be learned of the antecedents of Lumley and Mrs. Pierre. He gained such evidence of Lumley's parentage, as must have quashed his claims to the estate. He was on the eve of setting out for New York, when a letter from Mrs. Euston, enclosed in one from Mr. Spring, reached him. The existence of the true heir had been made known to them, and they were filled with apprehensions on account of the abduction of Clara. That her uncle's purpose was to force her into a union with Lumley, there could be no doubt, and Ashton was abjured to find her, save her from such a fate at all hazards, and bring her back to her friends.

The only feasible plan to accomplish this, was the one adopted. Only as his wife could Ashton wrest her from the guardianship of her Uncle, and in the silence of midnight, the murmured words which gave her irrevocably to him who had loved her from boyhood, were uttered. While prosecuting his investigations, Ashton made the acquaintance of Mr. Rivers, and accepted his invitation to remain at the parsonage while in that neighborhood, and he, when he understood the position in which she was placed, readily consented to lend his aid to defeat the iniquity intended to be practiced against the helpless Clara.

The result of the interview between Mr. Euston and his wife was such as might have been anticipated. She told her own story; dwelt on the fact that after the death of Gayoso, which might reasonably be expected to occur within a few months, she and her brother were the heirs at law to the property they were so anxious to secure; that their claims were really of more weight than those of Clara. Mr. Euston soon discovered that her own title to the property on which she resided was as fallacious as that she set forth to the inheritance of his niece. The plantation and slaves were mortgaged for much more than their actual value, and in a few months must pass into the possession of others.

But his blind devotion did not waver; his adored Lonore still fooled him as sweetly as ever, and made him perform her will with the conviction in his own mind that he was doing exactly as he pleased. They went to Europe at the time appointed, and Mr. Euston even found sympathy for poor Alfred who accompanied them, and thought it unjust that he could claim no portion of the magnificent fortune he had tried so hard to secure.

CHAPTER XXX.

Mrs. Euston was filled with alarm when she learned that Clara had actually left on the steamer with her uncle. The letter left by Mr. Euston explaining the small share her daughter had in the deception practiced toward her, relieved her mind of its keenest uneasiness; yet she was still far from reconciled to the departure of Clara in such questionable companionship.

Her first resolution was to follow her without delay, and had she known of the detention of the ship at Baltimore, she would certainly have overtaken them, and reclaimed her child. But no intimation was sent to her, and the telegram which purported to give her consent to the prosecution of the voyage, was written by Mr. Euston himself, and the letter subsequently received by Clara, was as she supposed the production of her uncle's wife. Her mother did write a long and affectionate epistle to her, but it was not permitted to reach its destination.

On the very day it was despatched, new and terrible fears assailed Mrs. Euston for the safety of her beloved daughter. Madame Latude had by this time sufficiently recovered to leave the asylum in which she had been placed, and before returning to Grove cottage, she called on Mrs. Euston and informed her of the frauds practiced by Lumley, of which the reader is already aware. Mr. Spring was summoned to take a part in the interview, and he brought Atkins with him to confirm the truth of Madame Latude's statements.

Such developments were made in the ensuing conversation as completely set at rest any claim that Alfred Lumley might bring forward to the disputed inheritance, and Atkins produced the original promise from Gayoso to compromise by dividing the estate with Clara, a skillful copy of which he had given to Lumley.

Mr. Spring had only that morning received a letter informing him of the actual relationship existing between the two chief actors in this drama of fraud. The plot so skillfully woven by the brother and sister was now clear, and it was too evident that Clara was intended to become the victim of their conspiracy.

One hope of rescue was still left. Ashton had not yet left Cuba; a telegram was despatched to New Orleans, to be forwarded immediately, in which he was informed of Clara's presence at Mirandola, and the probability that unfair means would be used to force her into a marriage with Lumley.

The despatch found Ashton in Havana, on the eve of embarking for the United States. No time was lost by him in retracing his steps to the scene of his late inquiries, and he ascertained that the party had arrived at Mirandola several days before his return. Accident enabled him to gain an interview with Kate Kelly on the very day of his arrival, and Ashton appealed to her feelings in such a manner as to induce her to become an active agent in effecting her young lady's escape, while his friend Rivers entered heartily into the cause of the lovers. Assured that Atkins was on his way from New York with full proof of all Lumley's delinquencies in his possession, the friends thought it best to defer the final *coup de main* till after his arrival; the result has been seen.

While these events were progressing in Cuba, events of not less vital importance to the personages of our story were transpiring in New York. Mrs. Euston's preparations for departure on the next steamer for Havana, were interrupted by a peremptory summons to the house of Mr. Linden, where some terrible catastrophe had occurred, the nature of which she could not gather from the frightened and bewildered messenger.

But before we accompany her thither, we must follow Madame Latude on her return to Grove Cottage. On arriving at the railroad depot, she found that a collision had occurred very near the city, and many persons on the down train had been killed, and others severely injured. She ordered the driver to proceed at once to the cottage; it was ten miles, and two hours elapsed before she arrived at her place of destination.

Madame Latude had communicated with her niece several times during her detention in the city, and had heard from home on the previous afternoon. No misgiving that all was not right entered har mind. She paid the hackman his fare, dismissed him, and entered the house. No one came to meet her, and wondering where her niece could be, she knocked at the door of Gayoso's room. No answer came, and after knocking again, she opened it and looked in.

Her heart almost ceased to beat as she beheld the scene the apartment presented. Every receptacle for papers was open, and their contents had evidently been tossed over. A faint odor of chloroform filled the atmosphere, and an empty bottle was thrown upon a napkin which had evidently been lately saturated with it.

Opposite a decaying fire sat Gayoso in his large chair, stone dead, with an expression of horror and helplessness stamped ineffaceably upon his features. His hand was resting upon a sheet of paper, upon which the pen it still grasped had been in the act of writing when the grim conqueror arrested it forever. On the bared wrist was a small purple puncture, which looked as if it had been made by a sudden blow from some sharp instrument.

His form was cold and rigid, and it was evident that hours must have elapsed since death surprised him. Luella was not in the house, and it was subsequently ascertained that a letter purporting to be written by her aunt had summoned her to New York to join her there She left the invalid in his usual health, and went thither to find that Madame Latude had herself set out on her return to the cottage.

So soon as she regained sufficient composure, Madame Latude proceeded to examine the scattered papers, with the faint hope of finding among them the confession which Gayoso had promised her. She knew that it had been written, for she had seen the package which contained it addressed to herself, and she also knew where it had been deposited. The secret drawer was rifled, and her intuition told her by whom. She thrilled with horror at the thought that a woman's hand could have inflicted the fatal blow which sent a sinful soul into the shadowy land, but she felt the conviction that but one could have committed this crime, and she wrote a few hurried lines to Ernest Linden, entreating him to come to her as soon as possible, as she had a revelation of importance to make to him.

Madame Latude felt it to be right to communicate with Linden before the death of Gayoso became known, as it was probably of the last importance to him that the fatal event of that day should never come before the public in its true aspect. The health of Gayoso was known to be so extremely shattered, that he might have died any day, and she was unwilling to have her house become the scene of an examination for the clue to a supposed murder, if it could possibly be avoided.

The letter was received by Linden, but he had neither time nor heart to reply to it. Mrs. Euston had been summoned to a scene of suffering and horror that almost paralyzed her. On a couch, half crushed, lay the form of Mrs. Linden, and from the disconnected account she was able to gather, she learned that early in the day Mrs. Linden had left home on one of her mysterious expeditions. Four hours afterwards she was brought from the railroad depot in the condition in which she then lay. A collision had occurred, in which she had been so fatally injured as to leave no hope that she could survive many hours.

The best surgical assistance was immediately summoned, but after examining her condition, the physicians declared that nothing could be done to save her. Narcotics were left to be administered whenever her condition demanded them, and the medical men departed.

Appalled by the suddenness and the awful nature of the accident, Mrs. Euston sat beside the dying woman, and ministered to her wants. For several hours she seemed to be unconscious of what was passing near her, but suddenly she awoke from a fitful slumber and looked wildly around her. She lifted her right hand, which was uninjured, and made an effort to feel in the pocket of her dress for something she missed.

"What is it, Amelia?" asked Mrs. Gaston, who also watched beside her. "What are you seeking?"

"The package," she muttered. "Where is it? Give it to me. After risking so much, daring so much to gain it, I will not lose my reward. What has become of it, I say? Oh, more than life depends on that paper."

Mrs. Gaston turned to her brother.

"Was there anything in the pocket of the dress she had on when the accident happened?"

"I do not know; I did not examine it. The dress is somewhere in the room, I suppose."

Mrs. Euston looked around, saw a black silk robe, torn and soiled, thrown over the back of a chair. She lifted it, felt something hard beneath its folds, and from the pocket drew a small square package of paper, stained with blood.

"This must be what she is in search of, yet it is addressed to ——" She paused, grew very pale, and looked at Linden. He was reading a note which had been brought him a few moments before, and the expression of his face as he glanced toward his wife, revealed to her that a new phase of suffering had been added to the burden he already bore. He mechanically stretched forth his hand, and said:

"Give it to me, Ellinor. I will take it to her myself."

He read the address—"To Madame Annie Latude for Ernest Linden,"—faltered, and would have fallen, had he not clung to a chair for support. That same name was signed to the note he had just read, and he recoiled before the shock and this sudden confirmation of his darkest fears.

As his hand was reached forth to grasp the package, complete consciousness was restored to his wife, and she uttered a cry so wild, so piercing, as to thrill the three with sudden terror.

"Not to him! Not to him! never!—give it to me; let me grasp it; let me carry it to Hades itself with me. Ha! ha! I can rule him through that torture yet; he will be half mine, even in death."

In her eagerness to grasp the papers, she attempted to lift her mangled form from the couch, and faint with horror, Linden motioned to Mrs. Euston to give them to her. She reluctantly obeyed him, for she began to comprehend how important they must be to Ernest himself, but she could not withhold them against his wish.

Mrs. Linden seized the package, glared wildly upon the unbroken seal, and pressed it firmly to her bosom. She muttered:

"If you loosen my death grasp from this, it must be by cutting off my fingers. Yet no—I must do better even than that. I must destroy this evidence of——no—no—he *never* shall learn that well kept secret. What! have I dared crime to be baffled thus? to bring to his very hand the knowledge I risked everything to keep from him? I—yes I will burn them: then all will be safe, and he shall go down to his grave, tortured with remorse—remorse that never dies."

Mrs. Euston felt that a dire secret rested between Linden and his wife, but she possessed too much delicacy to endeavor to fathom it at such a crisis as this, and she gave place to Mrs. Gaston, that the broken murmurs of the dying woman might not betray to her what Linden wished concealed.

He silently beckoned her toward himself, and placed Madame Latude's note before her. She read it, shuddered, and covered her face with her hands. She faintly whispered:

"*Could* she have done so ruthless a deed? and what could the motive be?"

"I am at a loss for the motive, but she is certainly guilty of the crime, Ellinor. She has taken life to serve some dark purpose of her own, and almost in the same hour, awful retribution has overtaken her."

"Ernest, secure that paper. It deeply, vitally concerns yourself. It was probably the acquisition of *that* which prompted her to commit this fearful crime."

"I will endeavor to do so; but to make any attempt to take it from her now, would throw her into the agonies of death."

Mrs. Linden's eyes suddenly flashed upon them. She hoarsely asked:

"What are you two plotting against me there? I know well enough that when I am gone, you will seek each other; love each other, as in those days before I set my evil eyes upon you, Ernest Linden. But you shall not entirely escape me; you shall still wear the livery of death upon your heart. Take your pure hand away from his bloodstained one, Ellinor Graham, for there *is* blood guiltiness upon his conscience. Look upon him now; see how he shrinks, and grows pale! Do you not see the consciousness of guilt in his face? Oh! ho! Ernest, you do not rid yourself of *me*, even if the grave does open its arms to enfold me."

Mrs. Euston involuntarily glanced toward Linden, and beheld upon his face such an expression of utter wo that she feared these wild charges were not entirely the ravings of delirium. She unconsciously lifted the hand she had placed upon his arm, and a triumphant laugh broke from the lips of the dying woman.

"Ha! ha! see how quickly the prude shrinks away at the suspicion of a taint of crime upon you; while I clung to you through all—found in your crime a stronger bond to bind me to you! Yet you prize *her* love far—far above mine. Love! no—I hate you—I wish I could drag you down to the flaming Tartarus clasped in my arms. Then the same flame would light us, but not of love—no—no—of deathless—endless despair!"

Her voice gradually arose to a piercing shriek, and then died away in a hoarse rattle in her throat. Linden stood pallid as death, with drops of agony bursting out upon his brow. Mrs. Euston thought his wife was about to breathe her last, and she glided to her side, resolute to draw the package from her hand before it stiffened into the rigidity of death. Mrs. Linden seemed to fathom her intention, for she buried it beneath the bed clothes, and half raising her crushed form she defiantly said:

"It is mine—*mine*, purchased at the price of my own life, and that of another, and you dare not dispute my right to dispose of it as I will. Bring hither a light: Ernest Linden draw near to me: hold the lamp steadily that I may burn this paper which concerns me alone. You hear me? it is *my* secret, and I possess the right to make sure that it perishes with me."

The pallid, ghastly face, with its wild eyes, and beseeching expression, appealed to him even more powerfully than her words. With resolute purpose Linden lifted the lamp, and approached her. She motioned to him to take the seat Mrs. Gaston had just risen from, and he silently obeyed her.

With trembling fingers she broke the seal—glanced over the closely written pages, and with a cry of mingled wrath and defiance, crushed the whole together in a mass, and held them toward the flame.

Excited beyond forbearance, Mrs. Euston said with lips white with repressed emotion:

"Oh Ernest! what is it you do? Wrest from her the mysterious power she wields over you. Let her not carry with her to the grave, that which must so deeply concern your future welfare."

His deep toned voice responded:

"It is *her* secret, Ellinor, and I have no right to tear it from her because she is helpless, and cannot defend herself."

An expression of exultation swept over the rapidly changing face of Mrs. Linden, and she said in failing tones though there was still bitter mockery in them:

"You were always an *honorable* man, Ernest; and you do not waver even in this crisis which binds you to me through all the years of remorse yet granted you on earth. Hold the light nearer; it flickers and fades before me. There—there that will do."

She held the papers in the flame which curled around them as if eager to devour them; but the hand that held them suddenly relaxed its grasp, and they fell to the floor.

Quick as lightning, Ellinor sprang forward, placed her foot upon them, and when the hand of the dying woman was again lifted, and the shrill voice shrieked:

"Give them to me! give them to me! I can feel, if I can no longer see them," with the intuitive quickness of her sex, she hastily snatched a sheet of wrapping paper which had been folded around a bottle of medicine, crushed it together, and placed it in the outstretched hand that nervously clutched at the empty air. Light was nearly gone; consciousness was rapidly failing, and her grasp closed at once upon the spurious paper. With a last effort she lighted it at the lamp, saw the flame spread upward, and sank back with an expression of triumph upon her features. With her last breath, she muttered:

"It is finished! He will never know it now! Ernest, beloved!—detested!—injured!—adored! this last act makes you mine—*mine forever!*"

A few moments they stood in breathless awe around this awful death-bed—then Mrs. Gaston took the lamp from the hand of her brother, and Ellinor lifted the papers she had so opportunely saved. She silently held them toward Linden, but he rejected them.

"No—not now, Ellinor. You have purchased the right to know all. Read them, and condemn or exonerate me as you may think I deserve."

"They may contain more than you are aware of. I have no wish to pry into your affairs, Ernest. You had better take these papers with you to your own apartment, and when you are calm enough, examine them at your leisure."

"No—no—take them from my sight. I know to what they relate. I cannot bear to look upon them. *She* is dead, and it can now be no injury to her to let you see why I was induced to marry her."

Thus commanded to read their contents, Ellinor put the papers in her pocket, and gave such assistance to Mrs. Gaston as was needed, before she retired to her own room.

With a beating heart she at length sat down, smoothed the scorched leaves, and commenced reading the confession of Gayoso. He seemed to have found some interest in relating the whole history of Amelia, for he went into such detail as explained all that was mysterious in her position and history. It began:

"I, Albert Lumley, known as Fernando Gayoso, here make a formal statement of my connection with Amelia Waltham, now known as the wife of Ernest Linden of New York:

"The father of this woman was a broken down gambler, who kept an écarté saloon at a fashionable German spa. He was a man of good family, but was disowned by his relations on account of his disreputable habits. His daughter was not handsome, but she pleased me; she was the chief attraction to his saloon; for a spirit of frolic possessed her, and she was equal to the best actress of her day in mimicry and comic power.

"I had been a bad man, and my acquaintance with Amelia Waltham did not improve me. I did not love her; such men as I am do not love anything but their own coarse pleasures; but she amused me, she interested me, and I was filled with fury at the thought that she preferred another before me. I became a partner in the establishment, and lavished on her the ill-gotten gains I derived from that source. She led me to believe that she would bestow her hand on me, and I felt quite secure of the position I occupied in her regard, till a young countryman of my own came upon the scene.

"Ernest Linden was handsome, accomplished, and eminently fascinating to women. Enticed by the high play, for which he seemed to have a passion, and attracted by the gay *badinage* of Amelia, he came again and again to lose his money at the écarte tables, and enjoy her imitations of the most distinguished comic celebrities of the day. She became infatuated by him, and flattered him by a preference as openly expressed as it was offensive to me. She even induced her father to offer him a large dower, if he would accept her hand. Linden declined the *honor*, but Amelia was resolute not to be baffled, and chance afforded her an opportunity to fix her fangs upon her victim.

"I hated Linden because he had supplanted me, and I formed a diabolical plot for his ruin. He lost largely at play, and frequently gave checks upon his banker. For one of these a forged bill was substituted, to which the signature of the firm was cleverly imitated, together with the name of Linden upon its back. I hired a man, who was a habitual hanger-on at the saloon, to present this at the counter of the banking-house, and cause a warrant to be got out for Linden's arrest. This was left in my possession, for the police were in our pay, and such transactions were often arranged to suit our own interests. My object was not to ruin him, but to fleece him of still larger sums than he had lost at our tables. We knew very well that the bankers would not willingly prosecute a foreigner of good position on such a charge as this, so we were safe so far as they were concerned.

"Linden was enticed into an unfair game, swindled of his property, and then the warrant for his arrest produced by the bully I had hired for the service. His fury was terrible, at the insult thus offered him; he struck blindly at the aggressor, and I—resolute to have him entirely at my mercy—plunged my knife to the hilt in the side of the wretch who had sold himself to my service. I struck again and again, resolute that the double crimes of forgery and murder should be fixed upon my victim.

"We were in a private room, and when the mêlée began, I managed to extinguish the lights—I had provided myself with a long-bladed knife similar to one I knew Linden habitually wore, and when my purpose was accomplished, I threw it from me into the farthest corner of the room.

"Before I could summon assistance, the infuriated Linden rushed upon me, mistaking me in the darkness, for his antagonist, and struck a blow on my head, from the effects of which I have never recovered. I fell apparently dead, and when Waltham and his daughter rushed in at the sound of the struggle, they found Linden standing over two men, one dead, and the other so to all appearance.

"The fight had taken place without witnessess, and if the case came before the tribunals, the punishment must be death. At the instigation of his daughter, Waltham offered Linden the alternative of an immediate union with her, or arrest for the crime he had committed.

"Bewildered—maddened, with no time for thought allowed him; wishing to save his family from disgrace through his means, the unhappy young man gave his hand to Amelia Waltham before day dawned.

"The supposed dead bodies were removed to a cellar beneath the house, and consigned to the care of an old crone, until they could be disposed of without suspicion. My victim was buried in a hole dug in the floor for that purpose; but the old woman found signs of life about me, which induced her to use every effort to restore me to consciousness. I had reasons of my own for suspecting that Waltham would gladly rid himself of me, if he could do so without suspicion; and I caused my old nurse to have me removed to a neighboring lodging, where I could be properly attended to until my wound was healed.

"On my recovery, I found that the saloon was sold out, the establishment dispersed, and I did not know where to find any of those who had inhabited it. I was weary of life on shore, and I again commenced my wanderings by sea. Years after the occurrence of these events, I came back to my native city. Linden was there with his wife. Her services were necessary to me, and I demanded them as my right.

"To her consternation, Mrs. Linden learned that I lived; that I could release her husband from the thrall she held over him by the threat of betraying the murders he believed he had committed. To retain Linden in this slavery was her resolution; for she rendered his life so miserable that she knew this to be the only tie she held upon him.

"My enmity to Linden is now dead; his odious and unprincipled wife is disgusting to me; and at the solicitation of a woman who has proved herself a true Christian, and a good Samaritan, I write this statement of facts. I cannot live much longer, and the bequest I make to Ernest Linden is my entire forgiveness, with freedom from remorse for crimes he never committed."

"FERNANDO GAYOSO—*née* ALBERT LUMLEY."

Many tears were wept over this revelation before the reader could gain sufficient calmness to seek Linden. She knew that he was in the library with his father, and with a light tread, Ellinor once more stood outside the door. She had once entered that room to find despair; she now came to it as the messenger of hope and release to a heart which had sinned, suffered, and repented, with an earnestness and truth in keeping with a nature originally noble, though, for a season, fallen from its high estate.

Mr. Linden raised his venerable head as she entered, caught the expression of her face, and asked:

"What is it, Nelly? You look as if a rainbow was actually spanning the cloud in which we have so long lived."

"You are right, sir. The cloud has lifted itself, and the sun shines through at last. Read this confession, Ernest; confide the whole story of your life to your father, and once more walk in the light of a clear conscience."

Scarcely comprehending her words of hope, Linden ran his eyes over the paper, his breast heaved, his face glowed with excitement as he exclaimed:

"And this is what Amelia would have taken to the tomb with her! Oh life! hope! ye come to me once more in the guise of innocence! I am not a Cain! The blood of my fellow man, shed by my hand, does not cry to Heaven for atonement! Lord, I thank thee! Oh, Ellinor! I bless thee, as the messenger of peace to my heart!"

Mrs. Euston glided from the apartment, and we draw a vail over the scene that ensued between the father and son.

CONCLUSION.

Mrs. Linden was quietly consigned to her grave in Greenwood. The murder of Gayoso was a mystery which was never unravelled, and such measures were taken as led the world to believe that he died of disease of the heart. But in the pocket of the dress worn by Mrs. Linden on that day, was found a curiously fashioned instrument resembling a tiny cimeter, made of gold, which on examination proved to be a more deadly and certain weapon of destruction than a battle axe wielded by the strongest arm.

A few days after the funeral, Clara reached New York with her happy and triumphant husband. The estate was now hers beyond dispute, but on learning the true history of the cousins, she settled on Madame Latude a handsome sum, and her sense of justice could not be satisfied without providing for Lumley in a liberal manner. An annuity sufficient to supply every rational want was secured to him for life.

Mrs. Seyton and her daughter had already established a flourishing business, but Madeline had fallen into a state of melancholy madness which rendered it necessary to place her where she could be properly taken care of. When Linden became aware of this, he would not consent that she should be placed in an asylum; he caused a room in his father's house to be fitted up for her accommodation, and performed the penance he considered due to his wrongs against her, by watching over the vagaries of her wandering mind with a patience and tenderness which proved how noble was the nature which had so long strayed from the path of rectitude; and is there not "more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just men?"

For the few remaining months of her life, all that the most devoted care could do to alleviate her settled melancholy was done by him. One bright day in early autumn, she was laid beside the little lad who had been the one joy of her broken life.

Three years rolled away, and the venerable father was summoned to join the caravan of death, which gathers its passengers at every flitting moment of time. Serene and resigned, he had but one wish unfulfilled.

His son had recovered his health and spirits, he had taken a stand among men which promised a brilliant future, but the darling wish that lay nearest the father's heart was not yet realized.

Ellinor sat beside his couch, his son bent over him to catch his last words. He held their hands clasped in his own, and a bright smile irradiated his features as he joined them together.

Linden earnestly regarded the bowed head; he whispered:

"Shall it ever be, Ellinor? Can you trust me?"

A faint pressure of the hand replied, and the dying lips murmured:

"Thanks, my child—my daughter at last! I am happy; I am now ready to go. Oh, Father! Jehovah! receive thy erring son, and grant him forgiveness;" and the released spirit sped away to the mansions of light.

THE END.

TIME WILL SHOW.

BY FINLEY JOHNSON.

You say you love me, dearest one,
With fond affection true;
And that though time may changes bring,
I'll find no change in you;
But will you love me when I'm old,
And time around shall fling
The cares of life, upon our path,
From off his heavy wing?
And when old age shall, one by one,
Place furrows on my brow;
Oh, will you cherish and adore,—
Adore me then—as now?
And when my hair is turning gray,—
My pulse of life beats low;
Oh, will you love me then, dear one,—
Time—only time will show.

Whate'er our lot in life may be,
I have linked my fate with thine;
Whate'er of chance or change we see,
Thy trials shall be mine;
And though misfortune's iron hand
Should upon thee be press'd;
I'd speak to thee such tones of love,
'Twould make thy pathway blest,—
The present, love, are happy hours,
Which we together share;
I love to gaze within thine eyes,
And press thy flowing hair;
But should we live till age has turned
Thy raven locks to snow,
My love for thee shall be the same,—
And time—yes, time shall show.

THE STEPMOTHER;

OR,

WHO'S TO WIN.

BY J. F. SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "RICHARD HOFFMAN," "STANFIELD HALL," "MINNIGREY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LIII.

> The youth you spoke of was a glowing moth,
> Born in the eve, and crushed before the dawn:
> He was, methinks, like that frail flower that comes
> Amid the nips and gusts of churlish March,
> Drinking pale beauty from sweet April's tears,
> Dead in the hem of May.
> ALEXANDER SMITH.

The night fixed for the removal of William Earl from West Lodge proved both cold and stormy. Dark masses of clouds, driven by the breath of heaven, partially obscured the light of the pale moon, which broke at times in straggling rays, like those of a miner's lamp, through the rents of a sable pall, lighting the landscape for an instant, and then were hid again. All Nature seemed disturbed, fretful, and uneasy; the trees bowed their tall heads, with a low, wailing cry, as gust after gust swept over them, whilst the babbling brooks that intersected the country murmured their sad songs hoarsely.

It was nearly eleven when the Templar, accompanied by Collin Craw, Trevanion, Squire Beachum, Hugh and the Bow-street officers, quitted Brook House, and, avoiding Wicksal, directed their way towards the prison of our hero. They started thus early in order to leave as little as possible to chance, and that they might take up a position favorable to their purpose.

"We are in excellent time," observed the worthy magistrate, as the party halted beneath a cluster of elms, directly in front of the ancient seat of the Gastons; "the chaise has not yet arrived."

"Thank Heaven," murmured the lawyer, who, on finding the road so much longer than he anticipated, had yielded to painful misgivings. "It wants but a quarter to the time appointed," he added, striking his repeater, for it was too dark to tell the hour otherwise.

The house was both silent and dark as if uninhabited; not a light was to be seen from any of the casements. One of the officers proposed that he should creep round to the principal entrance and windows of the lower apartments and listen.

"Do," replied Edward, "but be careful."

The man glided from the group of speakers, and was quickly lost to sight in the darkness that surrounded them.

"Poor William!" sighed Hugh. "What he must have suffered shut up in that lonely place, deserted, as he imagines, by all who love him! I never visited it except by daylight, and then it gave me the horrors. What can be my grandfather's motive for detaining him?"

Although a very natural question, the present was not the moment for answering it. The friends of the prisoner had other work in hand.

In about ten minutes the officer returned.

"Have you discovered anything?" inquired the watchers, eagerly.

"Nothing more than I suspected," replied the man; "the shutters are all closed and carefully fastened, but I heard voices in the lower rooms."

"Did you distinguish what was said?"

"Not a word."

"Hark!" whispered Collin, "I hear the noise of wheels."

They all listened, and presently the sound was distinctly heard upon the hard, gravelled road, which intersected the lawn, and led up to the mansion.

"You have the warrant," said Squire Beachum, addressing the officer, "and your instructions. I need not recommend prudence."

"All right, sir."

"Or firmness," added Collin Craw, who began to feel nervously excited. "If you succeed in rescuing my ward unharmed I will double the reward already promised."

"All right, sir," repeated the men, coolly, for they were accustomed to enterprises of a far more dangerous character, to look upon the present one as anything very serious.

The noise of wheels became louder and presently the lamps of the vehicle were seen, like two globes of fire, advancing rapidly along the road. The Bow-street officers disappeared—they had gone to take up their position close to the entrance of the lodge.

"Remain here, Hugh, with Mr. Beachum," said Edward, as he prepared to follow them; "on no account stir from this place."

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed the excited youth, as his relative moved towards the house. Collin Craw and Doctor Trevanion had already preceded him.

There were three persons assembled in the hall, waiting, as anxiously as the speakers, for the appearance of the post chaise: Sir Barnard Gaston, Beckford—who had arrived that very morning from Penswick—and the master of Wicksal poor-house. The countenance of the latter wore a troubled, haggard look—the death of Miles but half relieved his fears; the dreadful secret of his crime was known to his prisoner, and suspected by the baronet. The wretched murderer of Bella felt less secure than ever. A hundred times during the day he had felt tempted to ascend to the chamber in the turret and silence his fears by the death of William. The presence of his employer alone restrained him.

"I wonder what they are muttering about!" he ejaculated to himself, as the grandfather of our hero and his companion paced the lower end of the hall, "whispering together. No good to me—no good to me! Why am I no longer to be trusted?"

It was the suggestion of a troubled conscience, or rather of his fears; for neither Sir Barnard nor Beckford were thinking of him: their conversation was of the boy, and the captain, who had undertaken, for a certain sum, to transport him to a distant colony.

"And you are certain that he may be relied on?" said the former.

"As certain as one man can feel of the intentions of another. I have known Captain Hawkins for years. I have frequently had dealings with him. He is as remorseless a rascal as ever trod the deck of a free-trader. I might add, a pirate; for he has been both in his time, to say nothing of his bad dealings otherwise. When I first proposed the affair to him," he continued, fixing his eyes upon the iron-featured man who had so frequently employed his ministry, "he asked how much you would give to be rid of the lad forever."

"And what said you?"

"*Nothing*," said the tempter, who had his reasons, doubtless, for wishing to lead the baronet still further into crime.

"Did you name me to him?"

"No. I spoke of you only as a friend."

There was something in the word "friend" that grated on the ear of the proud, ambitious owner of Moultree. It showed him the utter degradation into which his evil passions had plunged him. The speaker noticed the momentary start, the knitting of the eyebrows, and smiled to himself.

To do Sir Barnard justice, he was far from contemplating an act so infamous as the death of his grandson. Strange to say, since he had seen the youth, witnessed his energy and courage, the old man half repented of his purpose, but only half; pride proved stronger than those better feelings he had so long been accustomed to stifle within his breast.

"No! no!" he muttered, as if arguing the question with himself, "not his life! not his life! Tell the captain of the vessel his own will answer for the boy's."

Beckford heard the decision with bitter disappointment. It would have been glorious to hold the wealthy Sir Barnard Gaston completely in his power.

By this time the inmates of the hall heard the rattling of the wheels upon the lawn, and the baronet cut short all further conversation by directing his agents to bring William from his chamber.

"He may resist," suggested Skillet, "in the hope of receiving something like an authority for employing violence." A scuffle, he thought, and who can tell what may happen?

"Pshaw!" said his employer, "a boy!"

"But he is armed," urged the ruffian.

Sir Barnard strode up to him, and looked the ruffian full in the face.

"Dog!" he exclaimed, "have you not lapped sufficient blood already? Dare you trifle with my orders? Think you I shall take my cue from such a prompter? Begone! you have your instructions. Beware how you exceed them."

And he pointed sternly to the door at the foot of the turret stairs.

Beckford and the master of Wicksal workhouse instantly disappeared, and mounted to the chamber of the prisoner, whom they found pale and dejected; his courage annihilated by the reaction that followed the terrible excitement of his struggle for life with Miles. The poor boy had shed blood: true, it was in self-defence; but his pure and innocent heart reproached him with it as a crime. No wonder they found him crushed and subdued. On the entrance of the two men, William fixed his eyes with such undisguised terror and disgust on Humphrey, that the latter could not endure his gaze. The pale features of the suffering boy reminded him of his victim, as he had seen her lying dead in the pauper's ward in the poor-house, and he turned his face aside to avoid it.

"You must follow us," said his companion.

"Where?" asked the prisoner, meekly.

"To the room below."

"I know your purpose," said our hero; "you intend to murder me—and I have no longer strength to resist. The few who loved me have abandoned me. God help me!" he added, bursting into a flood of tears; "what have I done to provoke such pitiless hate?"

"Stuff!" answered Beckford, "why should we murder you? and, if such were our intention, couldn't we just as well do it here?"

His companion looked as if he thought they might just as well.

"We have no time for trifling," continued the speaker; "there is one below whose temper is none of the mildest, so you had better not provoke it."

"My grandfather," thought William, as he rose to follow them.

Beckford would have led the way, but the prisoner caught him by the arm, and pointing to the master of the poor-house, exclaimed:

"Let him go first."

"What new folly is this?"

"Let him go first," repeated the youth. "I cannot answer for my reason if I hear the footsteps of my dear mother's murderer following mine. My screams may waken the echoes of this den of blood and crime. I already feel terror creeping through every vein—it envelopes me, palpably. I feel it like a shroud. Look at his eyes—mark their shifting, serpent-like glance, his cunning features, and hideous smiles! I dare not—*will* not—stir, unless that man go first."

"Give him his way, Humphrey," said his companion, somewhat moved by these passionate entreaties. "I don't wonder at his fears—the portrait is infernally like you."

"How fairer would yours be," demanded Humphrey Skillet, with a sneer, "if he knew as much about you as I do?"

Beckford considered himself far too important a personage to reply to this insolent speech, and coolly pointed to the door. The ruffian took the hint, and descended, his heart swelling with rage, bitterness, and fear; for whilst William lived, his life hung upon a thread.

"This reckless deed," said the baronet, the instant he beheld his grandson—alluding to the death of Miles—"has compelled me to change my intentions towards you. Your safety requires that you should quit this part of the country before it becomes known."

"Is he really dead?" faltered William, fixing his eyes upon Sir Barnard.

"The body lies in the adjoining room," was the reply; "enter, and satisfy yourself."

"No, no!" answered the poor boy, with a shudder. "I dare not look upon him; and yet it was in defence of my life I struck."

"There is a carriage at the door," said the owner of Moultree; "and this gentleman," he added, pointing to Beckford, "will accompany you."

"Where to?"

"A place of safety."

"Back to my friends—to those who love me—back to those you tore me from!" exclaimed our hero, imploringly. "I will be silent respecting everything that has taken place: not a word shall escape my lips—silent as the grave; but spare me—spare——"

This appeal was uttered so loudly that Collin Craw—who, with the Bow-street officers, had planted himself close to the windows—heard it, and could scarcely be restrained from attempting to force an entrance into the Lodge.

"Patience, sir," whispered one of the men.

"You will alarm his persecutors," urged the second, "and spoil our plans for surprising them."

By a violent effort the lawyer suppressed the agony of impatience gnawing at his heart, and, with a stifled groan, yielded to their reasoning.

He had not long to wait. Sounds of entreaties were once more heard; the next instant the door of the house opened, and Humphrey and Beckford appeared, dragging William between them towards the chaise. As soon as they emerged, the officers sprang forward, and seized them by the throat.

During the struggle that ensued, our hero broke from them, and ran, he knew not whither, calling for assistance.

"The boy has escaped!" shouted Humphrey Skillet to Sir Barnard Gaston, who still remained within the Lodge.

"Here, William, here!" cried Hugh, darting from the side of Dr. Trevanion and making towards the chaise, that he might meet and guide his friend.

At the same instant the dark mass of clouds rolled away, and, for an instant, the scene and actors became distinctly visible. The master of Wicksal—who had shaken off the officers—saw, by the momentary light, the figure of a youth crossing the lawn. Hate, and the burning desire of silencing the only witness, as he believed, whose testimony could endanger him, urged the miscreant to a second crime—the report of a pistol was heard, followed by a shriek of agony, and all was darkness again.

The assassin, alarmed at the deed, attempted to fly, but a pair of arms were twisted around his legs, and he fell upon the path.

"Idiot! beast! let me go!" he exclaimed, striking the locksmith, whom he had recognized by his chuckle. With a desperate effort he shook the cripple off, and rose—to find himself in the hands of justice. Before he could resist, a pair of handcuffs were slipped over his wrists. As the snap of the lock fell upon his ear, a cold shudder ran through the frame of the murderer—he felt that his doom was sealed.

On hearing the alarm, Sir Barnard judged that a rescue had been attempted, and hastened to the assistance of his myrmidons.

"Monster!" exclaimed Collin Craw, grasping him by the throat. "You shall hang for this night's work, if there is justice to be had in England."

"Madman!" ejaculated the baronet.

The affectionate guardian of William, heedless of his struggles, dragged the unnatural schemer into the house, and dashed him into a corner of the hall with a strength that partially stunned him.

"What means this lawless outrage?" demanded the owner of Moultree, as Edward and the squire made their appearance, followed by the officers, with Beckford and Humphrey prisoners.

"These gentlemen have acted upon a warrant, uncle, granted in London, and backed by one of the local magistrates."

"Beachum, I suppose!" said his relative, contemptuously. "I am perfectly prepared to justify my conduct in this affair. See that you are the same."

The dispute was ended by the appearance of Trevanion, bearing Hugh in his arms, wounded and bleeding. In the momentary light, the murderer had mistaken one brother for the other, and fired. William followed.

"My grandson!" said the baronet, with a groan.

"My boy! my own dear boy! safe!" exclaimed Collin Craw, throwing his arms around his ward, and pressing him to his breast, as if to shield him from the possibility of further danger. "God is just! Thank Heaven! thank Heaven!"

William could not reply to him for his tears.

Edward placed his arm around the neck of the dying youth.

"Trevanion, you must see to his wound. It may be merely a flesh one. This paleness, perhaps, is only faintness—loss of blood. Look up, dear Hugh, look up; you are with friends who love you. Do not give way; there is hope, there must be hope."

The poor boy regarded him with a faint smile, and murmured the name of his friend and schoolfellow. "Where is he?" he added, speaking with difficulty. "Let me see him."

William, who was kneeling by the chair in which they had placed the innocent sufferer, took his hand and kissed it.

"Save him," he sobbed.

All eyes were turned towards the doctor, who shook his head mournfully.

"Can nothing be done?" said Squire Beachum.

"Nothing. The vertebra is shattered."

At this terrible announcement Sir Barnard Gaston sprang towards Humphrey Skillet, and, in all probability, confounded and handcuffed as the assassin was, would have sacrificed him to his rage, had not the officers interposed.

"He is in our hands," observed one of the men.

"The monster! the villain!"

"There are a pair of us," replied the ruffian, insolently.

Again the baronet would have wreaked his vengeance upon the murderer, had not those who had him in custody prevented him.

"Don't make matters worse than they are," said the senior officer. "You will have quite enough to do to answer for your own share in this night's work. It is no use looking dignified and scowling at us, Sir Barnard Gaston," he added, firmly. "We are not to be frightened. We are used to all that kind of thing."

The baronet gave a haughty stare, astonished at what he considered a piece of extraordinary insolence, and with a gloomy countenance, walked up to the chair on which his grandson was dying.

"Keep him away!" cried Hugh. "Keep him away! Do not let me see him. He has murdered me. I shall not die in peace if his scowl is upon me. Let my last look rest upon those I love."

The wretched man turned aside, and, during the painful scene that followed, stood, with his arms folded, listening to and watching all that passed in silence.

"Mother!—my dear mother!" murmured the poor boy. "How her heart will grieve for me! William," he added, "I know that you will suffer too. I feel your hot tears upon my hand. But you are safe. Thank heaven, you are safe! I am grateful for that. You will not forget me? I am sure you will not; for I loved you dearly—very dearly!"

Worn by his previous sufferings, both mental and bodily, and the terror and excitement of the scene he had so lately passed through, his friend could only answer him in broken words. Grief choked his utterance.

Again the dying youth murmured the word, "Mother!"

It is extraordinary, even at an advanced period of life, how frequently that dear name occurs to us. In grief, misfortune, the wreck of worldly happiness and hopes, the heart and tongue recal it, as if there were help in it, that from the grave a mother's care watched over us, and her pure love sympathized with our sorrows. And who shall say it does not? The rich man, in his torments, thought of his brother, we are told. Are those who are in happiness less likely to prove mindful of the beings they loved on earth?

At least, there is consolation in the thought.

The Templar would have dispatched the chaise, which still waited, at once to Moultree, for Mrs. Gaston, but Trevanion prevented him.

"It could not arrive in time," he said; "the victim has not an hour to live, and the unhappy lady is too ill to be removed."

Edward Gaston turned aside to conceal his tears.

"Oh, that we were back at the rectory!" said the sufferer; "I never knew happiness, except there. Remember me to all my schoolfellows. I know they will regret me. Lift me up," he cried, as if a sudden spasm had seized him.

"No, no, William!" he added, as Trevanion placed his arms around his waist, with the intention of assisting him; "let William help me."

At these words our hero found sufficient strength to comply with the request, and had partially raised him, when Hugh, turning suddenly round, laid his head upon his shoulder, and expired without a groan, with a smile upon his lips.

His wish was gratified. His last look rested on the features of one he loved.

It was some minutes before even the doctor became aware that the pure spirit had passed away.

"Remove William," he whispered to Collin, when satisfied the final change had really taken place. "All is over!"

"No! no!" sobbed his ward, as his affectionate guardian gently tried to unclasp his arms from the body of his friend. "Not dead! not dead! Hugh, speak to me! speak to me!"

"He hears you from heaven!" said Squire Beachum, bareing his venerable head, and sinking on his knees in prayer by the corse.

"Dead!" shrieked William, imprinting a kiss upon the cheek of his brother; "dead! For me, mother and brother both murdered!"

The frantic accent in which the words were uttered startled the echoes of the ancient mansion; unseen voices appeared to repeat them; at least, so Sir Barnard Gaston thought. Even his iron nerves could no longer endure the scene—the reproachful glances with which all but the confederates of his crimes regarded him; and he was about to fly from the spot, when the officers of justice interposed.

"What mean you?" he demanded.

"Mustn't lose sight of you," answered the men, firmly; "a murder has been committed, if not by your hand, at least under your authority."

"A prisoner! ridiculous!" exclaimed the baronet, at the same time attempting to force his way past the officer, who coolly swung him round, and clasped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

"Rascal! villain!" roared the owner of Moultree, pale with rage. "Edward! Beachum! Trevanion! will you see me thus outraged, dishonored?—me, Sir Barnard Gaston, lord-lieutenant of a county, a magistrate!"

Passion and indignation so completely choked his utterance, the proud, ambitious man could proceed no further.

CHAPTER LIV.

God only wise, to punish pride of wit,
Among men's wits hath this confusion wrought;
As the proud tower, whose point the clouds did hit,
By tongues' confusion was to ruin brought. DAVIES.

The spectators of this painful scene gazed on each other as men gaze who have witnessed strange things. For awhile no one spoke, but each looked in the other's face, as if to ask where the surprise and horror of the night would end. Edward Gaston was the first to break this painful silence.

"Surely," he said, addressing the officers, "this proceeding cannot be necessary. We all are witnesses that my uncle's hand was not the one that fired the fatal shot. I must request you to release him at once from these degrading fetters."

"Impossible, sir."

"Can you be serious? Beachum, Trevanion, will you not interfere?"

The Templar thought of Maude, and what she must feel when informed of the shame heaped upon her unworthy parent.

"You do not know all," replied the senior officer, respectfully. "There has been more than one murder committed in this lonely place. My companion has discovered in the adjoining room the body of a man who has been stabbed to death. I am sorry for your relative, sir, and can understand your feelings, but I must do my duty. The law knows no distinction of persons in a case like this."

We scarcely need inform our readers that the body he alluded to was that of Miles Goring.

The locksmith, who had crept into the hall, dragging his crippled limbs as usual on the floor, uttered a low chuckle; but neither the baronet nor Humphrey Skillet imagined for an instant that it was anything more than his customary idiotic cry.

"That young viper did the deed," exclaimed Sir Barnard, at the same time pointing to his now only living grandson. "It was weakness, no doubt, to wish to save him, but you at least can understand my motive."

The cripple repeated his laugh, rolled upon the ground, and kept muttering to himself, "Both! both at last. I have them both!"

The accusation against our hero was received with incredulity.

"Do not condescend to deny it, my dear boy," said Collin Craw, interrupting his ward as he was about to speak. "No one here believes him."

"It is true," gasped William.

"Impossible!"

"True," continued the youth, "that I struck him in self-defence. He would have strangled me. See, see," he added, tearing open his shirt collar, and displaying the marks left by the murderous grasp of Miles upon his throat; "I refrained from using the weapon till the last instant. I am young, the love of life strong within me, and I acknowledge that I struck the blow. God will forgive me. He knows how sorely I was pressed."

Collin Craw threw one arm round his ward, and involuntarily drew him closer to him, as if to protect him against some unseen danger.

"You hear," said his grandfather, triumphantly, "you hear he acknowledges to having committed a murder. Release me instantly, or answer for the consequences of this violence."

This was addressed to the officers, but they were both experienced men, and knew perfectly well what they were about.

"Did you hear me?" added the speaker, haughtily; "or are you the dupes of that young villain's artful lie?"

"I have spoken truth. Indeed, gentlemen, I have spoken truth," exclaimed our hero.

"He has told nothing but lies," observed Humphrey Skillet, who fancied that he saw a faint gleam of hope in the accusation. "Sir Barnard will suffer for his weakness in wishing to screen him, and I for consenting to it. It's my opinion he shot Master Hugh himself."

On hearing this infamous suggestion, there was a burst of indignation from the friends of our hero, who smiled disdainfully—so monstrous did the idea appear to him of any one supposing he could have slain his brother.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Edward Gaston.

"I may be a wretch," answered Humphrey, "and my tale may be true for all that. What had I to gain by the young gentleman's death? And what had he?" he added, sneeringly, at the same time pointing to William.

The locksmith all this while had been rocking himself to and fro upon the ground in an ecstacy of delight. His antics at last became so boisterous that every one noticed them.

"Beautiful!" he shouted; "beautiful! How naturally the rascal lies! I could almost believe him myself. Go on, Humphrey; pray go on; entangle yourself still more deeply in the meshes of justice. Your invention is not half exhausted yet; it is endless, sublime as your impudence, and quite as amusing. Proceed; I love to hear you—it is music to me.

"Pity," he added, fixing his eyes with an expression of intense hatred upon the astonished wretch, "that the hangman's hand must cut short your eloquence so soon!"

These were the first consecutive words the baronet and his guilty instrument had heard the victim of their cruelty pronounce for years. No wonder they appalled them. Had a thunderbolt fallen at their feet they could not have felt more completely crushed.

"You speak rationally," observed Squire Beachum, greatly agitated by the painful task his duty as a magistrate imposed. "I have heard of your residence at the Lodge, but my informants described you as an idiot as well as a cripple. Have you resided here long?"

"I have been a prisoner here for years," said Andrews. "I cannot tell how many. My hair has grown white since they first brought me here. Perhaps it was for the best," he continued, in a more subdued tone. "Providence is wise—wiser than we dream of!

"The boy is innocent of Miles Goring's death," he added, solemnly.

"I knew it," murmured Collin.

"No doubt," retorted Sir Barnard Gaston, sarcastically. "Beachum! Trevanion! You are men of honor. I call upon you both to witness that William Earl himself confessed it."

"We shall state the truth," replied the gentlemen.

"As for that crippled idiot," added the baronet, "who has so strangely recovered his speech——"

"Viper! I never lost it. By affecting idiocy I saved myself from farther tortures, and, whilst the sport of your agents' brutality, became a spy upon them. Humphrey and Miles forgot that I retained the use of my hands. My skill enabled me to pick the lock of the young gentleman's prison. It was I who placed a weapon in his hand, with which he might defend his life. I knew it to be in danger."

"That is false," observed Beckford, who had hitherto remained silent. "I can prove, from the letters of Sir Barnard Gaston, that all he contemplated was sending the boy to sea."

"I will not ask my uncle to explain his motive," said Edward; "that will be made clear at the proper time and place. Are we to understand," he continued, addressing the cripple, "that you assert Miles Goring did not meet his death from this young gentleman?"

"I did."

"But he himself confesses to the deed."

"True," added William, firmly—"true, I struck him. I would not wrong my bitterest enemy, much less the grandfather of my dearest friend."

"Your hear him, Sir Barnard?" exclaimed his nephew.

The baronet turned aside.

"You struck him with the weapon I placed in your hand?" demanded Andrews.

"I did."

"Where is it?"

The youth drew it from his vest, and placed it in the hand of the magistrate. It was simply a piece of iron—rounded, and pointed at the end like a stylus, by having been ground upon a stone.

"You have the proof of his innocence," continued the cripple. "Let the wounds on the body of Miles Goring be examined. There are two. Both were mere flesh wounds. One will be found to fit the instrument that made it."

"And the other?"

"Was deepened by the knife of Humphrey Skillet, who sent the dead man's wife from the room, under pretence of seeking bandages, whilst he effected his purpose. I witnessed it all. The murderer heeded not the presence of the idiot object of his drunken mirth—the helpless sport of his brutality—whom Providence preserved to crush him!"

At this clear and explicit declaration, the heart of William once more beat freely. He was free from blood, free from the harrowing thought that he had taken the life of a fellow-creature, even in self defence, and he threw himself into the arms of Collin in a transport of gratitude.

"Wretch! liar!' cried the master of Wicksal workhouse; "I have no knife! Never carry such a thing. Search me, Doctor. Squire Beachum, order the officers to search me; do not let this idiot, in his malice, swear my life away."

"There is the knife," said the locksmith, placing the weapon in the hands of the magistrate, with Skillett's name engraved upon the handle. "Directly after the crime he concealed it behind the panelling in the side of the room, there, where it is loose, just under the portrait of the man in armor. I recovered it—have kept it ever since. I also saw him fire the shot that deprived the murdered boy of existence, and twining my arms around his legs, held him till he was secured."

"That is true," observed the officer: "I can witness it."

"Sir Barnard Gaston," said Mr. Beachum, "during the many years I have been in the commission, I have never been placed in so painful a position. As a neighbor, a friend, I feel for you, but I must do my duty You will remain here in charge of these men till the morning. I shall write to request the assistance of my brother magistrates. As for this wretch," he added pointing to Humphrey Skillet, "he had better be removed at once to prison."

The baronet turned haughtily upon his heel; his pride was too severely galled to permit him to reply. He—the owner of Moultree Park, and himself a magistrate—a prisoner!

"Surely," observed his nephew, "you may relieve him from those degrading fetters."

The squire looked at the officers, as if to ask their opinion.

The men instantly commenced searching Sir Barnard, removing from him his purse, a penknife, and everything that might serve him as a weapon, should he rashly make an attempt upon his own life.

"Do as you please, sir," said the senior one, "but we must both remain with him, and guard him in the chamber above."

It was finally settled that such should be the case, and the handcuffs were removed from the wrists of Sir Barnard.

As there was no one left to conduct the master of the poorhouse to jail, he shared the prison-chamber of William with his employer. Their greatest enemies might have pitied the abject terror of one, and the burning shame and rage of the other, as they counted the hours till morning.

Mr. Beachum and his friends, with the exception of Trevanion, entered the chaise, and returned with our hero to Brook House, where the rector was anxiously awaiting the result of their expedition.

"Thank Heaven! my dear boy," he exclaimed, the instant he saw his recovered pupil, "I have you safe once more."

Poor William could only murmur the name of Hugh.

The great legal attainments of Collin Craw, his experience, and, above all, his zeal, proved of infinite service to the worthy magistrate, who felt bewildered and disheartened at the strange and unexpected turn events had taken. One of the first men in the county was accused of murder, a circumstance that might shake stronger nerves than Mr. Beachum's. As for Edward Gaston, he could not take an active part against so near a relative; delicacy and feeling for Maude alike forbade it.

His *protégé* and friend, however, was differently situated; he felt no scruples on the point, but, on the contrary, sternly resolved to do his duty.

His first care was to obtain a search-warrant from the squire, and, accompanied by the village constable, proceed to the poorhouse. The prosperous lawyer could scarcely repress a smile at the obsequious bow of Bolt, the porter, who had so frequently cuffed him when a boy; not that he was naturally a bad fellow, but power, even in an inferior degree, is a sad test to most of us.

"Master's private office?" repeated Bolt. "Yes, sir. Mr. Skillet is from home. Gone for his morning walk. Soon be back, no doubt."

This was the excuse usually made to any of the guardians or justices who might call when the master was absent. Collin Craw had frequently been compelled to make it himself.

"No matter; we can perform our duty without him," he observed.

Not knowing what to make of the brief-spoken gentleman, the porter led the way to the room in which Dr. Trevanion had rescued the former, when a boy, from the brutal rage of Humphrey.

"There is the desk," said the lawyer.

The constables immediately began to force the lock.

"Oh! what are you a-doin'?" exclaimed the astonished Bolt. "Why, King! Hollis! It's highway robbery or burglary, at the very least."

"All right," said the men.

"But I tell you it aint right. Hollo! some on ye call Mrs. Penguin."

"Under a warrant from the squire," whispered one of the constables. "Sad affair; Mr. Skillet is in prison."

His subaltern appeared thunderstruck at the news. To his simple imagination, the master of Wicksal workhouse was, after Sir Barnard and the squire, the greatest man in the place; in fact, he had frequently asked himself whether he had not undervalued him in placing him third on the list of magnates.

"Prison!" he repeated, aghast; "what for?"

"Murder!"

"Lord be merciful to us!" ejaculated the porter; "I never thought him capable of that."

By this time the lid of the desk was forced open, and Collin diligently commenced his serrch amongst bills, reports, and parish accounts, for letters or proofs of Humphrey's correspondence with the baronet.

"Not here," he muttered, "not here."

Whilst thus occupied, the matron sailed majestically into the office. Years had added but little to the *embonpoint* of the lady; the voice, perhaps, was a little more husky, and the features more wrinkled. Her former drudge recognized her in an instant.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed, addressing the constables; "why, King, Hollis! what is the meaning of this?"

"All regular, marm."

"Got Squire Beachum's warrant."

"His warrant, indeed," repeated Mrs. Penguin, with a disdainful toss of the head, "a fig for his warrant. The desk belongs to the guardians. Bolt, run for Mr. Lowden; he will see if——"

"I tell you it's all right, marm," interrupted the senior constable; "if you doubt it, ask this gentleman—a great London lawyer," he added in a whisper.

At this announcement the matron made a profound curtsey.

"Our proceedings are perfectly regular and legal, my good woman," observed Collin. "Humphrey Skillet is accused of murder."

Mrs. Penguin uttered a faint shriek.

"And we are searching for proofs amongst his papers. By-the-bye," added the speaker, suddenly recollecting himself, "if I mistake not, the accused has another desk, one covered with leather, which he keeps in the board-room."

"Nothing of the kind," gasped the matron. She and Skillet had played for so many years into each other's hands, that she felt bound to serve him if she could. Besides, there was no knowing what compromising proofs of her own transactions with him the desk contained.

"Not under the bureau?"

"He must be a great lawyer," thought the porter, who had seen it in the spot indicated, a hundred times.

The lady would have quitted the room, but on a sign from Collin the constables detained her.

"I *will* go!" she shrieked. "I won't be held. Call some of the paupers! Help! help! Bolt, why don't you knock them down for me? This shall cost you your place."

Despite her cries and struggles, the guardian of William disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with the desk under his arm.

"Thieves!" shouted Mrs. Penguin, "thieves!"

"There are worse characters even than thieves, madam," observed Collin, with well-assumed gravity, "murderers, for example; perhaps you are not aware that, in the eye of the law, any one aiding and abetting such persons is held to be *particeps criminis!*"

This little piece of Latinity produced a wonderful effect upon the matron. The discovery of her own private peccadilloes, in tampering with the parish accounts, appeared a trifle in comparison with the unknown dangers of *particeps criminis.*

"Where is the key?" demanded Collin.

"Mr. Skillet has it," answered the woman, in her most obsequious tone, and with a low curtesy.

"I shall take the desk with me."

"Just as you think best, sir."

"And if the guardians ask who removed it," added the lawyer, with a sly touch of humor, "tell them Collin Craw, under a warrant granted by Mr. Beachum. They will find me at Brook House, where I am staying upon a visit."

Placing the desk in the hands of the constables, and motioning them to precede him, the speaker quitted the office.

Both matron and porter were thunderstruck, and regarded each other for several minutes in silent stupefaction. As a matter of course, the lady was the first to recover the use of speech.

"Bolt!"

"Mrs. Penguin."

"What name did he say?"

"Collin Craw."

"The world's at an end! he a lawyer? Why, I have boxed his ears just to warm my hands of a winter's morning, a hundred times at the very least."

"And I cuffed him," added the porter.

In less than an hour it was known throughout the house that the master was in prison, and Collin Craw, who had risen to be a gentleman, had come and taken away his desk and papers.

"Ah!" muttered Peg Manders, the nurse, when she heard of it, "I allays knowed the boy would get on! Yer all called him a fool, and mocked me for speaking well on him. If I could only see him," she added, "if I could only see him."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

STORY OF A STRAYED CHILD.

Late last autumn, a farmer living near the Adirondacks, in this State, went out to cut timber on the mountains, in a remote and solitary locality. He took his son along with him, a little boy of about four years of age. After having been employed for a short time, he missed the child, who had been amusing himself in chasing a kid which he had found on the hill, and he became alarmed lest he should have fallen into one of the many ravines, or stumbled over some of the rocks or precipices with which the place abounds. No trace of the boy, however, could be found. In vain did he call upon his name, for no answer was returned. The anxiety of the father led him from place to place with the utmost rapidity, sometimes finding the prints of his son's little feet on the leaves, but he never dreamed of crossing a deep gorge which runs on the south side of the locality alluded to, down the steep and rocky side of the mountain, to the margin of the Hudson. Over this gorge he conceived it impossible for a child to make its way. In the evening he found means to send to the settlement an account of the circumstance, and several humane persons, accompanied by the distracted mother, came to aid his search for the poor child in this wild and rocky region. One of them happened to cross over the gorge alluded to, perceived there the impression of the boy's footsteps, and these were occasionally traced all the way down to the margin of the Hudson, where they lost all trace of the unfortunate little wanderer, and were filled with the most painful apprehensions that he must have been carried off by the stream. Going along its banks, and crossing ravines and steeps, which they conceived it almost impossible the child could have passed and climbed, they again found the print of his naked feet on the soft sand of a small rivulet; and by applying a measure which they had taken of the former impressions, they found it exactly to correspond. They were therefore induced still to go forward, though they had now proceeded upwards of four miles from the place of their setting out; and they continued on for the space of about another mile, accompanied by the anxious father and mother, without finding any further traces of the boy. Night was now coming down upon the forest; and as the search had continued eleven hours, over a rugged space of five miles, they thought of retracing their steps, in despair; the distracted mother tearing her hair, and starting at every white stone, and figuring to herself the horrid spectacle of the torn corpse of her child at the bottom of every cliff or stream which they passed. At this time one of the party, who had been before the rest, on looking into the stream of the Hudson, found a handkerchief round a stone in the channel of the river, which he recognized to be that of the child, and had now little doubt that he would be found drowned near this place in the stream. He called the rest of the party to approach; when, a little farther down the bank, he perceived the boy with his feet in the water, and his head resting on a stone, in a quiet sleep. "Johnny! Johnny!" cried the trembling father, "are you alive?" The little pilgrim lifting his head from his rocky pillow, exclaimed, "Oh father! is it you? Why didn't you come to help me catch the little kid?" The little fellow's cap was filled with pebbles, with which he had pursued the kid from rock to rock, from hill to hill, and through the ravines for upwards of five miles, barefooted, over one of the most rugged tracks in the State, and had been for twelve hours without tasting a morsel of food. The sudden joy of the mother had nearly cost her her life, but the young wanderer was found not to have suffered injury from his long peregrination.

THE DAYS THAT HAVE FLOWN.

"Time flies!" How often does the phrase tremble on our tongues, and yet how seldom do we take counsel from its wisdom! Ever complaining, and seldom doing, we reproach the past, because, as the poet truthfully taught, "we take no note of time, but from its loss." As if that which we ourselves neglected were chargeable with the fault. Strange perversity, unhallowed nonsense, and against it we wage war to the teeth—our armor being cheerfulness and contentment, and our only weapon the inborn hope of man. We respect the past, nay more, we love it for the good lessons it taught us; and, as a great poet rattled through some half dozen of his best stanzas, by giving as many musical variations upon two pretty words, we, humbly following so illustrious an example, will venture to assert, despite the neers of a whole battalion of hypochondriacs, that "'tis sweet" to think of the days that have flown—days that linger in the memory like dim shadows of young time. The journey has been a gentle one, so let us linger by the way. And first and foremost we would remark, that why should what we have lost of our brief existence be associated with sadness or regret? There is nothing in the constitution of man which sanctions or encourages so outrageous a satire upon the dearest and noblest of Heaven's gifts—human life. The past! why should we rail against it? why abuse a thing gone we know not whither, and in which, while it lasted, we lived, moved, loved, and had our being? It is silly baseness to traduce what was ever ready to assist us when we felt inclined to assist ourselves; for the greatest grumbler alive must, in his conscience, admit that the past always held out the hand of fellowship, and never disdained to give those who were willing a hearty shake.

THE GRAVE AND THE PINE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I.

What shall you plant beside her grave?
Ah, let it be the soul-like pine!
Nought commoner than such should wave
By such a shrine.

II.

'Twill be a harp unto the breeze,
When from the chambers of the West
He comes to chant, with these sad seas,
Above her rest.

III.

Dear pilgrim! in the lonely eves
Of Autumn brooding sweetly dim,
We'll kneel beneath the solemn leaves,
And join thy hymn:

IV.

The hymn that breathes her tender worth,
Her long, self-sacrificing love,
By seraphs borne at last from Earth
To burn above:

V.

Yet not forgetful of the hearts
Still left in struggling life below:
Yes, yes for us o'er Being's marts
Her love will glow.

VI.

Then let us go unto the grave,
And plant by it the soul-like pine:
Nought commoner than such should wave
By such a shrine.

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THE MASSACRE OF WYOMING.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

The terrible massacre of Wyoming, which has been recorded by historians and sung by poets, is familiar to the general reader, but the subjoined thrilling sketch of some of the incidents connected therewith, from the lips of a venerable old man who now "sleeps with his fathers," will doubtless prove interesting to all classes.

"I was a mere infant (said the aged narrator) when my father sold his farm in Connecticut, and, together with several of his neighbors, removed to the beautiful valley of Wyoming, in Pennsylvania. This was in the year 1769, and at that time it was believed by our people that this valley of Wyoming belonged by right of charter to the colony of Connecticut, but the settlers from different portions of Pennsylvania contended it was theirs by right of purchase from the Indians, and so the two factions got into a bitter quarrel, by which considerable blood was shed on both sides.

"My earliest recollections are of this feud, and the violent animosities thus engendered; and of being at times shut up in the fort, hearing the rattle of musketry, and seeing men, all bloody, stretched on litters and pallets, some living and groaning, and some dead, cold and ghastly. These sights and sounds of deadly contention my young senses had in some measure become accustomed to; but still I cannot say I was prepared for the horrible scenes which followed a few years later.

"The beginning of the war of the Revolution put an end to our civil strife in the valley, and, I may say, united the two factions against a common foe. Why contend among ourselves for the possession of a few acres, while a foreign enemy was laying waste the whole country, and taking all our lands and rights from us? Nowhere, I believe, among the colonies, did the fires of patriotism burn brighter than in our late contentious valley, from which went forth all the able-bodied men that could be spared, and who proved themselves heroes on many an ensanguined field.

"It was while our brave soldiers were away, that the infamous tory commander, Colonel John Butler, conceived the inhuman design of marching an overwhelming force upon the defenceless settlement, and taking a fiend's revenge in the murder of the weak and innocent. For this purpose he collected four hundred British and tories and seven hundred Indians, descended the Susquehanna, and captured or took possession of a couple of forts at the head of the valley.

"Never shall I forget the terrors excited by the appearance of this armed body of white men and savages, for we knew ourselves defenceless, and that we could expect no mercy from such an enemy. Here were several hundred women and children, a few hoary-headed and trembling grandsires, too old to bear arms, a few stripling youths, too young for the war, with a sprinkling of men in the prime of life, the remnants of the train-bands which had gone to join the army of Washington. Of old and young that could bear a musket to the field, we could scarcely raise a force of four hundred to oppose to eleven hundred, and not a single fort, out of several in the valley, that could withstand for an hour the assaults of the enemy. What could we expect, therefore, but a horrible and indiscriminate butchery, or a still more horrible captivity among brutal and merciless savages.

"Oh! the agony that almost burst my young heart, as my poor, dear mother, with glaring eyes and pallid features, threw her fond arms around myself and younger sister, and strained us to her bosom! praying, amid choking sobs, that God in His Providence would preserve us and suffer us to escape the impending doom. She was now our only hope, and we her only solace—for my father was away with the army, and had not been heard from for several months.

"There chanced at this time to be in the valley a few experienced officers, the most prominent of whom was Colonel Zebulon Butler; and by unanimous desire he took command of our devoted little band of defenders, and led them forth to the sacrifice. Young as I was, being only between nine and ten years of age, I asked permission to go with them and meet my fate with the rest—but my poor mother would not permit me out of her sight for a moment. Along with a great many other women and children, she had taken refuge in one of the several stockade forts; and there, trembling, cowering, and praying together, we all awaited the terrible result.

"The sounds of the conflict began between four and five o'clock in the afternoon; and from that time till near dusk, when the wild yells of our savage enemies announced that they had gained the victory, we all stood clinging to one another in breathless hope and fear,—the silence with us only broken by smothered groans or short ejaculations; but now, when we felt that all was over and lost, every breath seemed to be sent forth with the most indescribable anguish.

"A few minutes later a man, almost naked and covered with blood, burst in through the gate, and groaned out, as he fell dying to the ground:

"'All is lost! all is lost! Fly to the mountains and save yourselves!'

"With a wild cry of terror and anguish, my mother caught up my little sister in her arms, seized me by the hand, and darted forth through the rear gate and toward some trees that grew upon the bank of the river.

"It was not yet dark, and in the dim light we could see figures running in every direction, some in flight and some in pursuit.

"One man, who was only a few paces before us, was pursued by a fleet-footed savage, who soon overtook him and thrust his spear through his back; and as we altered our course to avoid the latter, I saw him bending over his victim for the purpose of taking his scalp.

"A woman on our right, with an infant in her arms, and who was evidently making for the same point as ourselves, was caught by a savage, and both were brained within twenty feet of us. The monster stopped to secure the scalps of both, which gave us time to reach a little thicket on the bank of the river, within which my mother secreted herself and us, and whispered us not to speak or scarcely breathe.

"All around us now were the screams and shrieks of women and children, the triumphant and appalling yells of savages, and the occasional reports of muskets, as here and there the enemy shot down a fugitive in cold blood. Shortly after, a lurid glare fell upon us; and looking out through the bushes, we saw the flames bursting from a window of the nearest cabin, and a group of dark figures collected around it.

"'Oh, merciful God! is there no hope for us!' groaned my mother, straining us convulsively to her heaving breast.

"'They will soon see us here,' said I, 'it gets so dreadful light.'

"My mother shook all over with maternal anguish, as she added:

"'And now it is too late to fly—for the moment we stir from here, we shall be exposed to a hundred eyes. Gracious Heaven!' she added, catching her breath convulsively, 'there is a party coming this way. Oh, God! my poor children! oh, God! my poor children!'

"My little sister gave a long, choking sigh, and pressed her bloodless face against my mother's bosom, as if to shut out the sight. I looked and saw the men advancing straight toward us. There were five of them, the centre one seeming to be forced forward by the others.

"'I do not think they have seen us,' said I, hurriedly; 'let us get down into the water; it is better to be drowned than to fall into their cruel hands.'

"'Oh, yes!' gasped my mother; 'anything rather than that. Keep still, my children, while I try the water.'

"The bank at this point was providentially overhanging and the water not deep; and as my mother quickly and silently lowered herself into it, she announced, with an expression of heartfelt joy which I shall never forget, that through the blessing of God we might yet be saved. She drew us silently after her, and we all crouched down under a shelving bank that completely screened us from the view of any one standing on the ground above; and though by this position the water came up above our waists, we only rejoiced that it so much the more added to our concealment and safety.

"The men we had seen approaching, came to the bank of the river, a few paces below our concealment, and then a coarse, gruff voice said:

"'Here it was, John Aikens, under this very tree, you pledged your love to Margaret Stanley; and I took an oath then that you should die here.'

"'Mercy, William—mercy!' pleaded a trembling voice.

"'I'm a loyal heart, and you a rebel,' replied the other; 'and you needn't look for mercy from him you call a tory. If Margaret lives, I'll have her; but you shall die at any rate!'

"With these words there came a report like that of a pistol, followed by a sort of gurgling groan and the sullen plunge of a heavy body into the water. I could feel a shiver run through the frame of my delicate mother and sister, as we all clung together in silent horror at this cold-blooded murder—perpetrated, not by a savage, but by a man who was akin to him he slew.

"We did not actually see any more of the cold-blooded atrocities of that terrible night, but we heard them all around us. Cries, screams, yells, and reports of muskets, still resounded. By the light of the now burning buildings, fugitives were constantly being routed from their places of concealment, and were then shot, stabbed, or tomahawked—no quarter being given in any case, and only here and there one making his escape. The whole plain, and the whole stretch of the river along the plain, was a scene of atrocious butchery. In one case, sixteen men were placed in a circle around a rock, and each held by an athletic Indian, while a squaw, armed with a knife and tomahawk, walked coolly around, and stabbed or brained them one at a time. In another instance, nine others were served in the same manner. Of the four hundred gallant fellows who went forth to defend their homes only sixty escaped from that field of slaughter; and when to these we add the women and children that were slain in every direction, with others who died of fright, fatigue, and starvation in the wilderness, we swell the list till the heart of humanity fairly sickens at the contemplation.

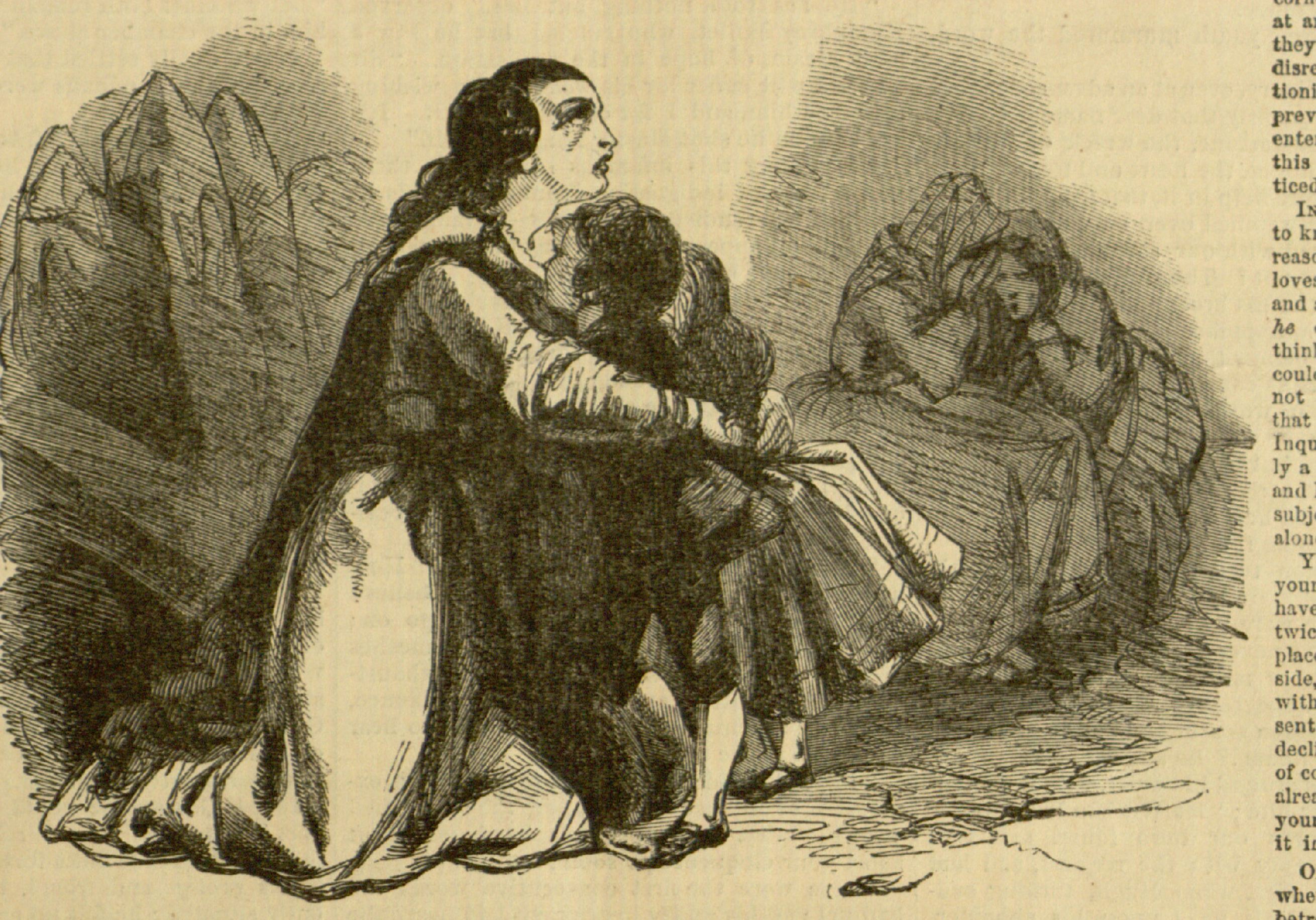
"We remained in our last place of concealment, unseen and unmolested, till the fires had burned down, and savage thirst for blood had so far been satiated as to bring sleep to the eyes of those human demons; and then we tremblingly crawled forth, and chafed our water-benumbed limbs, and stole away among the shadows of the trees, past here and there a ghastly corpse, and so escaped to the mountains, where overtasked nature forced sleep upon us just as another day was dawning upon the world.

"It would take me hours to describe the scenes of hardship, peril and suffering which occurred even after our escape from the field of massacre.

"On awaking from our brief but troubled sleep, we were joined by a party of three women and seven children, who had been concealed among some rocks over night, and had commenced their toilsome march at the break of day. One of these women was a young, fragile creature, carrying an infant less than a week old. Her husband and brother had been slain in the battle, and she had risen from a sick bed and fled, to save the life of her child rather than her own. She soon after fell from exhaustion, and died while we were trying to revive her. We were obliged to leave her without burial, and hasten on to save ourselves. My mother took the babe and carried it for several hours, but during the day it went into convulsions and died also.

"As we continued on we overtook parties who had become exhausted, and had sat down to rest, perhaps never to rise again. One white-haired old man we found reclining against a rock. My mother took hold of him gently, and spoke to him kindly, thinking he was merely dozing. She started back with a shudder, for the old man was dead.

"The first night following our flight we slept on a bare rock, in a wild, gloomy place in the mountains, having had nothing to eat since our escape. Long before morning my little sister became feverish and delirious, and began to call for her father. My mother sat up and held her in her lap the rest of the night; but it almost broke her heart to see her in that condition without being able to do anything for her, and to hear her plaintive calls for him who might even then be filling a soldier's grave.



"As soon as it was light, we set forward again—my mother, though scarcely able to stand, carrying my sister in her arms. I plead to be allowed to relieve her, but she would not consent to it. On reaching a running stream, she made a cup of leaves and gave my sister as much water as she could drink, and bathed her in it besides. This acted like a charm, and broke the fever, which did not trouble her again.

"Before noon we came upon a large field of whortleberries, of which we all ate ravenously; and these I think saved our lives; for without some sustenance, I am certain we could not have held out another day. This day two women gave out and were left behind; their fate I never learned.

"Another night and another day in that awful wilderness; and then, joy unspeakable! we reached a settlement, and were saved.

"A month later my father joined us, and such a happy reunion I never saw. We had lost all our worldly goods, it is true; but we had all met again on earth; and that, under the circumstances, was a blessing to thank God for the rest of our lives.

"Alas! how few of all the once happy hearts in the beautiful valley of Wyoming, could join with us in our thanksgiving!"

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. T.—Nature is our best teacher in the matter of inflicting punishments for disobedience, as she is in most other things. All of her penalties have for their object the prevention of evil and nothing else. There is no vindictiveness in them, and they should perhaps be called *warnings*, rather than punishments. For example, if a child hits its head against a hard substance, or takes hold of a hot iron, or thrusts its finger in hot water, it is *warned* not to do so again, by the instant occurrence of pain, and the pain is always exactly proportioned to the magnitude of the transgression. There is no scolding, or long-drawn "talkings-to," or petulant fuss, but instant, *silent*, inescapable *action*, which will tolerate no excuse, and from which there is no appeal. The legitimate result *must* follow the act. It is not easy, of course, for parents to follow nature in the training-up of children, unless they give more attention to the subject than has usually been bestowed upon it, still, the thing is done in some well regulated families. It must not be supposed, from the foregoing, that we are advocates of child-flogging, or that we believe in inflicting upon disobedient children such thumps, and burns, and scalds, and hurts, as nature does. That would be unnatural and illogical. What we advocate is, that the actions of a child shall, as far as possible, be followed by their *legitimate consequences*. For example, if a child makes a litter, it should be made to clear it up; if a child throws things into disorder, it should be required to replace them; if a boy gets his clothes muddy, he should be made to clean them; if he carelessly or needlessly destroys or loses his playthings, he should be made to go without toys for a time. This course is much better than flogging or scolding; the child sees that there is justice in it; it becomes a valuable moral discipline, and early inculcates the correct principles of self-government.

A **Subscriber**.—You need not be at a loss as to how you can regain the lost confidence of a lady friend when you are ignorant of your offence. The only *manly* way in such a case, is to go directly to the lady and have a frank explanation on the subject. If she declines to meet you with a reciprocal frankness, you, at, least, have acted the part of a gentleman in the matter, and will have no cause for self-reproach, nor for regret either, as a woman who would refuse an explanation under such circumstanstances would not be worth a regret.

Zatilla.—You should not have ceased speaking to a gentleman to whom you had a proper introduction, *merely* because you seldom met him. We do not know what advice to give you about "speaking in case you should now meet him in company." We are inclined to the opinion that you had better let things remain as they are, unless she first speaks to you, which is not at all a likely thing for a *man* to do under such circumstances.

Captain.—You tell us the young lady to whom you are engaged seems to enjoy the evenings you *don't* spend with her better than those you *do*. Very well, why do you leave her at all then, evenings? Perhaps, too, you may be mistaken in supposing that she enjoys herself better in your absence. Be careful how you decide on so delicate a matter, and above all, see that *you* are not yourself faulty in your conduct in regard to the lady.

Cincinnati.—This correspondent, who is a "spirited young man," says, "A young lady upon whom I called allowed me to sit all the evening in my overcoat, and did not ask me to call again. What shall I think of it?" We cannot answer such a general question. She might not have known it was an overcoat that you sat in, and she *might* have been too diffident to ask you to come again. Try visiting her once more.

An Annoyed Young Lady says that a young man, knowing her to be already engaged, persists in sending her offers of marriage from himself, and in this emergency she asks, "What is my duty towards my affianced in regard to this matter?" As you have accepted his right to protect you, it is your duty to hand the case over to him, and let him settle the matter for you.

Lola.—We do not think it would "make a person feeble-minded to be engaged several times and break the engagement," because a person must be *already* "feeble-minded" to be capable of such errors of judgment and fickleness of affection.

Egean.—The word Soedologer belongs only to the language of slang. We find no trace of such a combination of syllables in the dictionaries of any other language.

O. O.—You should not "marry a widow lady whom you love and have known ten or fifteen years, while your friends, and hers, both object to such a union," *unless* you both love one another well enough to be loyal and constant to each other if friends should officiously or maliciously attempt to interfere between you. If you both have not firmness and love enough to resist this opposition at the outset once and forever, and make your own world of happiness, if need be, sufficient for you both, don't dream of marrying each other.

H. B.—When a lady enters a store, should a clerk ask what he shall show her? or, if she has made a purchase, ask if there are other goods she wishes to examine? We think he should not ask any questions at all. We think ladies prefer to look about, and have salesmen only be prompt to answer what questions they ask. Any other course is very embarrassing to timid ladies, who dislike being badgered and cornered into looking at and buying things they don't want. Their disrelish of such questioning by clerks, often prevents them from entering stores where this system is practiced.

Inquisitive wants to know what is the reason all the girls *he* loves don't love him, and all who love him, *he* don't love. We think a man who could *really* love does not generally fancy that girls *love* him. Inquisitive is evidently a conceited fellow, and had better let the subject and the girls alone.

Yuddy.—When a young man whom you have never seen but twice, on leaving the place where you reside, leaves his picture with a neighbor to be sent to you, you should decline to receive it, of course; or, if it has already been left at your residence, send it immediately back.

Orient.—A lady, when not married or betrothed to the gentleman she is walking with, should not take his arm in the daytime.

Tailors.—In response to the query in the **Ledger** of December 8th, 1860, as to the origin of the saying that "it takes nine tailors to make a man," or that "a tailor is only the ninth part of a man," several correspondents have each sent us a legend to the effect that many centuries ago, a poor, houseless, homeless, penniless man, who was wandering disconsolately in the streets of London, finally went into a tailor's shop and solicited charity. The tailors at work there, nine in number, gave him a shilling each, making nine English shillings (about $2.25) in all, with which the stranger went forth elated, and began life anew with such vigor and discretion, that he soon became a thriving citizen, and went on from success to success, until he became a man of great wealth, a baronet, and a Member of Parliament. In a speech that he was making in the House of Commons one day, he alluded to his former poverty, and declared that "*nine tailors made a man of him!*" From this arose the proverb that "nine tailors *could* make a man;" which was afterwards unfairly changed to, "*it takes* nine tailors to make a man;" and from this came the unjust and unhandsome inference that "one tailor (or a tailor) is only the ninth part of a man." This is manifestly a piece of great popular injustice, inasmuch as, in the course of ages, the unthinking would-be wits have converted what was originally the tradition of a most honorable and praiseworthy exhibition of benevolence into an irritating badge of disgrace. It is fortunate, however, that tailors, as a class, are too intelligent, and have too high a sense of the worth and dignity of their honorable calling, to care for such a silly saying; and thereby they deprive the proverb of its intended sting.

Brooklyn.—This correspondent writes respecting the stopping of the clocks in the house where a dead body lies. The custom indicates, he thinks, that with the deceased, time is done, and that he has entered a sphere where existence is not measured by hours and days. He also mentions another ancient German custom, that of covering the looking-glass in the death chamber with a white cloth, which he says is intended to rebuke pride and vanity. Another correspondent—a lady—says that the old-fashioned German clocks, in use when this custom originated, exhibited the day of the month as well as the hour of the day, so that any one on looking at the clock, which was always stopped the moment the deceased expired, could see at once the exact date and hour of the death, whereby all questions on that point were obviated. This, she thinks, was the main reason for the original practice of stopping the clocks, and the custom naturally enough continued when time-pieces ceased to give the day of the month, and was also adopted even in those far-off days by those whose clocks only told the hour.

Zack.—Platonic love simply means love without desire to possess. That Plato himself was not a very Platonic lover, we may infer from one of his epigrams that has come down to us:

> "Thou gazest on the stars, my Life! Ah, gladly would I be
> Yon starry skies, with thousand eyes, that I might gaze on thee."

Platonic love, as described by Plato himself, is the communion of kindred souls, without regard to sex, and may exist as well between two men or two women as between a man and a woman. "Platonic love," says a writer, "meant ideal sympathy; it now means the love of a sentimental young gentleman for a woman he cannot or will not marry."

Boy.—The nearest to the earth of the fixed stars is Sirius, commonly called the Dog-star. Astronomers compute its distance from this planet at two billion two hundred thousand million of miles. This distance is utterly inconceivable by the human mind, but you can get some faint idea of it by considering that a sound would be fifty thousand years in travelling from Sirius to the earth. A cannon-ball, when going at its utmost velocity, moves at the rate of four hundred and eighty miles an hour; and at this rate, would consume five hundred and twenty-nine thousand two hundred and eleven years in traversing the distance. This is the best we can do for you.

Maria D.—The substance called jet, from which articles of ornament are made, is a kind of exceedingly hard and compact coal, found only in one of the departments of France, where, for several centuries, it has beem made into earrings, bracelets, etc. Of late years, however, jet has been so successfully imitated in glass and other substances equally brilliant and more durable, that the original jet district, from employing a thousand persons in the manufacture, now gives occupation to less than one hundred. Genuine jet loses its polish by use, which is not the case with the best imitations.

Astor.—The Sixpenny Savings Banks did not originate in the United States, but in Greenock, in Scotland, where, about ten years ago, Penny Savings Banks were also established, which still flourish. Such banks existed in London, Manchester, and other English cities before they were known in America. There is a bank in London of this kind which boasts ten thousand depositors, whose average savings are a little less than two dollars a year each.

Mother.—"Not lost but gone before," as applied to departed friends, occurs in a Greek writer who flourished 300 years before the Christian era. One of the fragments of Antiphanes is thus translated:

> Cease, mourners, cease complaint, and weep no more:
> Your dead friends are not lost, but gone before,
> Advanced a stage or two upon the road
> Which you must travel in the steps they've trod.
> In the same inn we all shall meet at last,
> There take new life, and laugh at sorrows past."

Inquirer.—No correct estimate can be made of the sum of money expended annually in New York for charitable purposes. All we can say is, that the united incomes of the various benevolent associations amount to about two millions of dollars, but a large part of this is contributed by the "rural districts," and an immense amount is given here in charity that is known only to the Recording Angel.

M. A. H. wants to know, "If a gentleman escort two ladies to church, and in returning leaves them and escorts two others home, and then overtakes the first two ladies, would they do right to leave him?" Of course; they would be greatly wanting in self-respect to do anything else.

M. G.—Your minister has a right to preach the doctrine which so much offends you, if he believes it; but you also have rights, one of which is to absent yourself from a church where opinions are expressed which you consider erroneous.

R. J., Jr., Baltimore.—This correspondent has views of his own on the "sound question," and writes as follows: "One correspondent says, the question resolves itself into this simple proposition—is sound a cause or an effect; if a cause, then it exists independent of the tympanum or drum nerve; if an effect, (which he affirms,) the existence of said nerve is absolutely necessary to the *development* of the effect. Now, while I admit that sound is an effect produced from several causes, yet I do contend that the cause does not and cannot originate with the ear or atmosphere, and that if the *cause* is *apart* from these, then the *effect* is *independent* of them. And that this is so, I will attempt to prove. There is not one reflecting, thinking mind, but must be impressed with the fact that there is nothing in the universe but what is the effect of a first cause, for 'God spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. For all things were created by him, and without him was nothing made that is made.' The vocal powers of beasts, birds and insects were all created while as yet man had no being; the glorious sunlight lifted the curtain of darkness from the face of nature before the eye of man had looked upon the beauties of creation; so that man's ear was not created for the development of sound, any more than his nasal organ was made for the development of the fragrance of flowers; but to make him sensible of their existence. Now, the *brain* is the seat of sense and reason; and I hold that the brain is also the great distinguisher of sound, and that the ear is no more than a conduit through which sound is conveyed to the brain. Now, to upset your late correspondent's acoustics, it is only necessary to demonstrate the fact that sound is both *conducted* and *reflected*. That sound is conducted can be proved by several experiments, but one will suffice: for example, close the ears so that no external sound can penetrate them, and then take a watch between the teeth, and you will be as sensible of the tick of the watch as though the ears were open, the sound being *conducted* through the jawbone; and an echo is proof enough that sound is *reflected*." Another correspondent, who is the principal of a Mississippi academy, wants to know, in case a material ear, or tympanum, is absolutely essential in order to the existence of sound, or its recognition, if *that* would not prove that the disembodied souls of human beings (which of course have no *material* ears) are incapable of hearing. Who will answer our Mississippi friend?

The Bottle Question.—We have received scores of responses to the "Old Sea Captain's" question in regard to the reason why an empty and tightly-corked bottle with the cork sealed, that had been sunk in the sea to the depth of 1200 feet, should come up full of water, with the *cork inverted* and firmly fixed in the orifice. The unanimous belief of our correspondents is, that the phenomena are due, first, to the great pressure of the water at the depth of 1200 feet, whereby the cork is forced into the bottle; secondly, by the sealing-wax, which *inverts* it; and thirdly, to the expansion of the air in the bottle as it approaches the surface, whereby the inverted cork is forced back again into the orifice. This is, undoubtedly, the true solution of the phenomena. According to Professor Leeuwenhoek, the pressure of sea water at the depth of 1200 feet is 70,000 pounds to the square foot. This being the case, the empty bottle, at the depth mentioned, would be crushed, did not the cork give way, and allow it to be filled so as to equalize the pressure of the water. The bottle, of course, would be full of air, which would be greatly compressed by the water at the depth of 1200 feet; but as the bottle rose to the surface, the pressure of the water would decrease, the air in the bottle would expand, and force the cork (inverted by the weight of the sealing-wax on one of its ends) back into the nose of the bottle. One of our correspondents says he has often tried this experiment, sometimes with a bottle sealed and sometimes not sealed, that whenever it has been sealed, the cork has invariably been found inverted and driven into the nose of the bottle, and when not sealed, the cork has been found in different positions, but *generally* lying in a horizontal position across the orifice. This seems to prove conclusively that the reason why the *sealed* cork is always found inverted and driven into the nose of the bottle, arises from the fact that the end to which the wax is attached is thereby made the heaviest, and the cork kept in a perpendicular position, and *being in this position*, when it begins to be operated upon by the force of the expanding air, its upper end enters the nose of the bottle, and it is soon forced firmly therein.

Hopeful.—Hopeful is a good signature for a boy who has an aptitude for painting and no means whatever of cultivating his talent. You will need all your hopefulness, Master Hopeful, and an indomitable resolution besides, to emerge from the condition of a poor country lad to that of an accomplished artist. It can be done, however, and it has been done. We presume that quite one half of our American artists were once in just your circumstances, poor country boys, with an unconquerable propensity to spoil the walls of their bedroom with pencil drawings, and to adorn their father's barn door with etchings in charcoal. Benjamin West was such a lad; Leslie was only a bookseller's errand boy; Vanderlyn was a poor tavern-keeper's son. We find it difficult to give you direct advice, because we do not know how much talent you have, nor precisely your present circumstances. But this we can say: if you have in you the capacity to become an artist, together with good health and invincible determination, you can attain your object. It is not usual for artists to take "apprentices," for few of them can afford to keep one; but, as you live within two hours' ride of New York, it would be worth while to come here for a few days, if you can manage such a stupendous undertaking, and inquire at every studio in the city, and see if some artist would not be willing to give you a little instruction and opportunity, in return for such services as an eager and intelligent boy could render him.

Jessie.—It is strange that we should receive so many letters like that of Jessie. She was engaged to be married to a man who afterwards proved himself to be a vascillating, worthless fellow. Now, instead of rejoicing at her narrow escape from the perdition of marrying such a person, she mourns over the loss of him, and inquires how she shall get him back again. She should rather set apart a private thanksgiving day in order to celebrate her happy deliverance, just as mariners used to do in the olden time after a perilous voyage. If she had married the man, and then discovered his true character, she would have had a cause of lamentation which no power on earth could have assuaged.

S. M.—It would be of little use to our readers to "give a small agricultural department in the **Ledger**," as you suggest. To make such a department truly valuable, a large space—in fact, nearly the whole of our paper—would have to be devoted to it. Besides, that field is already occupied by other publications. The American Agriculturist, published in this city by Orange Judd, contains almost everything in the way of periodical agricultural literature that a farmer would need. It is the best "agricultural monthly" in the world, and costs only one dollar a year.

Steamboat-man.—The law provides that persons connected with vessels and railroads shall not lose a residence by reason of their absence from home when engaged in the pursuit of their calling, but does not permit them to vote at any place other than their legal residence. If you live at St. Louis you must vote at St. Louis. As you were at New Orleans on election day you lost your vote. This may seem to you unjust, but consider what a wide door would be opened for fraudulent voting if the law were otherwise.

Continent.—This young gentleman, seventeen years of age, having been taken from school at the age of twelve, is so overwhelmed with a sense of his ignorance, that "it quite maddens him," and he fears he shall "do something desperate." We advise him to do it. Let him lay violent hands on all the instructive books that he can lawfully procure, and never let them go until he has forced them to tell him all they know. Don't spare them, sir; make them yield the last syllable of their contents.

W. M.—This correspondent appears to consider himself an injured being because we have not told him, in reply to his question, who were the Seven Wise Men of Greece. Now, it happens that this question comes to us on an average about twice a week; but, in compassion to the majority of our readers, we make it a point not to give the information more than twice a year. The time for repeating the names of these celebrated worthies has not yet come round.

M. C.—You were rather hasty in sending back all your lover's notes, presents, &c., because you "heard" that "he had been gallanting a young lady about to balls, parties, concerts, &c., during his absence in another city." The report may be false, or at least so exaggerated as to do him gross injustice. It is generally believed that *real affection* is too trustful to condemn its object on mere rumor.

H. R. N.—The number of works published annually in the United States averages about 2000, in England, 5000; in Germany, 4000. We import from Europe nearly a million volumes per annum, including periodicals.

E. P. B.—"If I were to throw a kiss at a young lady, what should I expect her to do?" Box your ears, or get her brother to do it.

⁎ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*